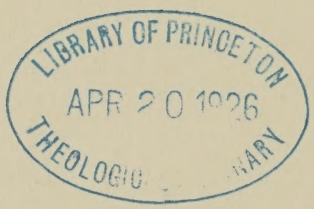
WESLEY ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

JOHN W. PRINCE



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Wesley on Religious Education

A Study of John Wesley's Theories and Methods of the Education of Children in Religion

by
JOHN W. PRINCE
Professor of Bible and Religious Education in the University of Chattanooga

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TO MY MOTHER:

IN REVERENT MEMORY

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INTRODUCTION

THE religious-educational theory of John Wesley merits critical study for many reasons. His position in history as the founder of a religious movement which has extended into every country in the world, numbering to-day some forty million members, and constituting one of the largest branches of the Protestant faith, justifies the investigation of an aspect of his thought that has been neglected. Besides this, in his own day he was a pioneer of popular education, stimulating the intellectual life of the English people and conducting educational enterprises continuously for over fifty years. Furthermore, the far-reaching religious-educational work of the Methodist Episcopal Church continues in unbroken line a movement which he initiated.

To be sure, much has been written about the extent and nature of his endeavors to spread education. The philanthropic aspect of the schools he conducted has received thorough treatment. The story of the enterprise to which he was most devoted, the Kingswood School, has been told in a sympathetic way by three of its former pupils. The history of the Sunday-school movement of the Methodist Episcopal Church has been written, and takes account of his relation in general to the rise and progress of Sunday schools. But none of these studies, nor any other so far as can be discovered, attempts to set forth the theories which form the underlying basis of his educational practice. In fact, his theories have been generally overlooked in the attention given to their immediate application. To treat this aspect of the life and work of John Wesley is the purpose of the following investigation.

This essay will give an exposition not only of Wesley's methods of religious education, but also of the fundamental doctrines underlying them. In fact, the two lines of research are inextricably joined, and, in the last analysis, constitute one and the same problem, both finding their source in what he conceived to be his mission. The key to all his labors is his passion

to lead sinners to inward and outward salvation, and to deliver English life from the inroads of vice and irreligion and start it on the way to righteousness and holiness. He was therefore first and foremost an evangelist, seeking by the methods of the revival to bring men to a new birth from sin and unhappiness into the freedom and privilege of sonship with God. But his mission to children began as early as his evangelistic work, and kept pace with it in intensity of purpose and breadth of scope. This combination in him of the evangelist and the educator suggests the main problem of this dissertation. It is to discover the relationship in Wesley's system of theology between the conception that the religious life of adults is built up around the experience of conversion and the conception that the same life is dependent in the case of children upon definite religious instruction. Seldom have the two conceptions been found together in individuals, or in movements from their inception. Usually, the awakened interest in education is one of the effects of the revival rather than a movement parallel with it. Many evangelists have preached with great power, but only a few of the greatest have combined with it an eagerness to spread education. What explanation is there for the existence of the two lines of effort in Wesley? Since everything he did has a connection with his desire to save sinners, in what sense did he believe the education of children would contribute to their salvation?

Historically, there have been two general theories of the religion of childhood. According to one theory, children can be brought to saving relationship with God only when they are old enough to undergo conscious conversion in the way of grown people, and until that time are to be left alone to grow up in sin. According to the other theory, children are to be trained in the faith from their earliest years, and when they reach the age of personal responsibility they are to take the vows of discipleship for themselves without any strained efforts for emotional crises. The crises may be present, but they are not deemed necessary nor are they encouraged. This latter is the theory of the Church of England, to which Wesley belonged all his life, and it would be natural to expect him to favor it. Which of these, if either,

was his view? If he held a different view, what was that, and what the theories springing from it?

In order to determine this it will be necessary to get at his theology, to bring together its various strands and correlate them. Unfortunately, this has never been done in any but a summary way. Theologians making the broad assumption—which is correct in the main—that he shared the doctrines of the Reformers, have presented his position but in skeleton. They have paid slight attention to the particular ways in which he justified his position. And what is more pertinent here, some of the minor points in which he could differ from the Reformers and still hold their general conclusions, bear directly upon children and are among those that have received next to no treatment at all. It will be necessary, therefore, first to present his theory of redemption. This will include discussions of his theory of human nature in its ideal and present conditions, his doctrine of conversion and the life consequent upon it. In the second place, an investigation will be made into the bearing of these doctrines upon the life and education of children. No attempt will be made to present his theological positions in full except where they are related definitely to the education of children. Some matters that in a study of Wesley's theology would need ampler treatment will be but briefly mentioned in this study of his educational theory.

Throughout it must be borne in mind that Wesley was a preacher and not a philosopher or a systematic theologian. He was "remarkably inconsistent," as Doctor Workman says, for a man possessing a mind so unusually expert in logic.[1] His aim was practical rather than speculative. He was indeed deeply interested in philosophy and theology, but particularly as these

[1]Workman, *The Place of Methodism in the Catholic Church*, p. 95. Compare also, for a concrete example, Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 378. In discussing Wesley's views of sinless perfection, he says: "I have found no way of harmonizing all of Wesley's statements at this point; and I am inclined to think that he never entirely cleared up his own thinking concerning the nature and scope of sin. At first I believed that a path out of his seeming inconsistency might be found by means of an exact chronology, but a severer examination of all his writings forced me to give up even that hope." Abundant other comments of this tenor are to be found in Curtis's book.

bore upon his main work and helped him to perform it. Consequently, oftentimes at points of crucial importance to the investigator he does not enter into elaborate discussion or have deep concern for consistency. This necessitates in several instances a recourse to analogy and deduction in the endeavor to decipher his theories.

CHAPTER I

THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE

I. Original Sin and the Fall

"The three grand scriptural doctrines" at the center of Wesley's theology of the nature and conditions of salvation are original sin, justification by faith, and holiness consequent therefrom.[1] His well-known summary of his creed shows the natural relation of these fundamentals to each other: "Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three—that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself."[2] The interchange of the word "repentance" for "original sin" in these two statements is justified, repentance, roughly speaking, being the conviction that one is in original sin. Their exact correspondence will be explained in due course. Nothing Wesley ever said or wrote can be detached from these three principles of his system. How important and indispensable he considered them is shown from a letter he wrote in 1764 to forty or fifty clergymen, evangelicals of the Church of England, in which he proposed a union of all clergymen who agree in the essentials —original sin, justification by faith, and holiness of heart and life—with the only other condition that the lives of the men who

[1] Wesley: *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 757. All references in the footnotes to Wesley's *Works* indicate "The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.," New York, 1831, edited by John Emory and published in seven volumes. Although this edition is styled the "first American complete and standard edition," it does not include several of Wesley's writings employed in this study. References to these will be especially indicated. Furthermore, although Emory's edition of Wesley's Works contains his Journal, this study has used the standard edition of "The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.," London, 1909–1916, edited by the Rev. Nehemiah Curnock and issued in eight volumes. This is the latest and most scholarly edition, and contains notes and documents not easily accessible elsewhere. All references to the Journal in the footnotes refer to this edition.

[2] *Works*, Vol. V, p. 333.

hold these answer to their doctrine.[3] These doctrines he felt to be of deeper importance than others for vital religion. Among any people ignorant of these Christianity could not accomplish anything.[4] The other doctrines which he stressed do, as he claimed, naturally lead to or spring from these three fundamentals. Taken as a whole they constitute a system of theology whose structural unity has received little written appreciation.

Of the three doctrines, the doctrine of original sin is the first in order and importance. It forms the porch of his theological structure. From it he derives his theory of human nature. Wesley was profoundly convinced of the fact of the Fall. He was much concerned over the current denial of depravity by the rationalists and their insistence upon the goodness of human nature. Such a denial, he said, is no "other than old Deism in a new dress; seeing it saps the very foundation of all revealed religion, whether Jewish or Christian."[5] Wesley felt it his Christian duty to provide an antidote to such deadly poison as was spreading not only through the nation but was making inroads into the universities.[6] To this end he wrote a long and deliberate treatise on *The Doctrine of Original Sin According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience,* in answer to a work on the *Doctrine of Original Sin,* by Dr. John Taylor. It is interesting to note in passing that Jonathan Edwards wrote a rejoinder at about the same time to the same work, called *The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended.*[7]

Wesley's treatise is divided into seven parts. The last four parts consist of extracts from Doctor Watts' *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind,* from tracts by the Rev. Samuel Hebden, and from Boston's *Fourfold State of Man,* all of which defend the doctrine under discussion. Wesley's own contribution to the subject is in the first three parts. There he deals with the present and past state of humanity and defends the scriptural method of accounting for it.

From this work and from a sermon on "Original Sin," and

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[3] *Journal,* Vol. V, pp. 60–61.
[4] *Works,* Vol. II, p. 437.
[5] *Ibid.,* Vol. V, pp. 492, 650.
[6] *Ibid.,* Vol. V, p. 492.
[7] Faulkner, *Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman,* 43–44.

from many references to the same subject running through his sermons and other writings, it is possible to gather his views on the place and significance of the doctrine in his system. Viewing the past and present condition of mankind, Wesley sees universal corruption. God's purpose for the race was very different from the course it has taken. From the earliest times down to the present the race shows unmistakable signs of a departure from God's plan for it, a falling away from what it was meant to be, with regard to virtue and knowledge. The present condition is no better, either in the Christian world or in the heathen and Mohammedan. A curious evidence of the lack of common sense in the heathen is the foot-binding custom of the Chinese and their alphabet of thirty thousand letters.[8] In the Christian world no further sign of utter degeneracy is needed than the presence of war. In his treatment of this subject Wesley waxes hot and eloquent. "Surely all our declamations on the strength of human reason, and the eminence of our virtues, are no more than the cant and jargon of pride and ignorance, so long as there is such a thing as war in the world."[9] War is the "complication of all the miseries incident to human nature" and is the most demonstrative proof of the universality of ungodliness.[10] "So long as this monster stalks uncontrolled, where is reason, virtue, humanity?"[11] Then coming down from the general to particulars, Wesley draws an unflattering picture of conditions in Great Britain, domestic, professional, and social. Lawyers, government officials, clergymen come in for appraisal along with humbler folk. Then, if there is any doubt of the truth of depravity remaining in anyone's mind, let him begin at his own home, surveying himself, his family, and his neighbors. He will find the same conditions of human misery and wickedness in plain evidence. Even the children of the home, whom the parent so admires and believes to be happily different from other children, are not excluded. Evil tempers, self-will, passions, stubbornness, and surliness exist in them to some extent at least even before they are

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[8] *Works*, V, 506.
[9] *Ibid.*, V, 512.
[10] *Ibid.*, V, 522–523.
[11] *Ibid.*, V, 513.

two years old.[12] This universal degeneracy seen from every standpoint and condition of life in the past and present is the cause of universal misery, and the misery is the proof of the degeneracy.[13] Such are the facts. How account for them?

This undenied bias of all ages and nations to the side of vice and ignorance rather than virtue and knowledge cannot be explained by attributing it to evil customs. Accounting for it thus leads no nearer to solution, for the question logically arises, Whence came customs to be evil? Nor can it be explained by bad education, for then the cause, prevalence, and persistence of bad education must be explained. Wickedness must have been antecedent to evil custom and education.[14]

The only true method of accounting for original sin is the scriptural method. The transgression of Adam in Paradise brought sin into the world and entailed its consequences upon all his descendants. This is the key to the whole mystery of the baseness of human nature and the misery and wickedness of the world.[15] Wesley is careful to clear God of the responsibility for the origin of evil. He does not have much to say as to the actual cause nor elaborate the circumstances of the entrance of sin into the world, but he does exonerate God. He, at least, is not responsible for the corruption of human nature.[16] Evil came into the world from Lucifer, the fallen angel, who became devil. He was the first sinner in the universe, the author of sin, who introduced it into creation. Together with him a great host of angels fell from heaven and likewise became devils.[17] It was Lucifer who tempted Adam and who ever since, in conjunction with the other devils under him, has been tempting mankind.[18] Thus did original sin enter into the world. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of original sin is highly to the credit of God. To believe that God created man in his fallen state, in his present stupid, stubborn, intractable condition, with weakened understanding and perverse will, would be to impugn the very goodness of God. We must

[12] *Ibid.*, V, 518–519.
[13] *Ibid.*, V, 521.
[14] *Ibid.*, V, 523–524.
[15] *Ibid.*, II, 479.
[16] *Ibid.*, V, 574.
[17] *Ibid.*, II, 70.
[18] *Ibid.*, I, 376–384; II, 70, 141.

either disbelieve in such a God, says Wesley, or believe him to be utterly evil. If that is his nature, the faith even of a Deist would not be justified. Atheism, or the belief of a Manichee, would be more logical and inevitable.[19] "I know not what honor we can pay to God, if we think that man came out of his hands in the condition wherein he is now."[20]

Adam as he was created by God was perfect. He was created in God's image—in his natural image and in his moral image. Wesley makes his natural image to correspond to the spiritual nature of God, and uses the terms "natural image" and "spiritual image" interchangeably.[21] This consists of the faculties of understanding, will, and liberty, and is what constitutes man a spiritual being.[22] Every human spirit possesses these faculties. Of these the understanding is the most essential to a spiritual being, if not the very essence of such.[23] It carries much the same meaning as reason, to which it is to be preferred, being a less ambiguous term.[24] Its principal powers are apprehension, judgment, and movement from one judgment to another.[25] Its main purpose is to guide the will and liberty, to furnish the rule of action for the whole of human nature.[26] By the will Wesley means the power man has to exercise his nature, his passions and tempers, his likes and dislikes, which determine his bent and are summed up under the term "affections." In fact, these affections are but the will exercising itself in various ways.[27] Wesley says the faculty of liberty was in his day often confused with the will. But, as a matter of fact, it is neither a property of the will nor does it bear the same nature, but it is a faculty distinct from it, an entity by itself. It is the power of self-determination, the property to choose to do or not to do, to elect good as well as evil.[28] It is indispensable to a free agent, without it the understanding and the will being utterly useless, incapable of either virtue or holiness.[29] It is evident that Wesley means by this

[19] *Ibid.*, V, 574.
[20] *Ibid.*, VII, 112.
[21] Wesley: *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, I, 7.
[22] *Works*, I, 400.
[23] *Ibid.*, II, 69.
[24] *Ibid.*, II, 51, 127.
[25] *Ibid.*, II, 127.
[26] *Ibid.*, II, 50, 69; VI, 208.
[27] *Ibid.*, II, 69.
[28] *Ibid.*, VI, 208.
[29] *Ibid.*, II, 36, 69.

power of liberty nothing more or less than the common acceptation of the word "will."[30]

These are the faculties with which Adam was endowed in his spiritual nature when created by God. He possessed these faculties in perfect form. His understanding was without defect, having such powers as no man has had since, enabling him to see truth as directly as the eye sees light. Perhaps while in his perfect state it was not necessary for him to reason, for he may have been able to discern truth by a kind of intuition.[31] He was also free from defects of passions or affections, his will being unbiased toward evil, since it was under the dictate of his infallible understanding.[32] His liberty being likewise dictated by his understanding led him to choose only the right.[33].

Adam was also created in God's moral image. He was endowed with a moral nature like the divine, holy and righteous.[34] At this point lay his supreme perfection, for he had an aptitude for appreciating, loving and obeying God,[35] a condition that made absolutely unnecessary the faculty of faith.[36] He was morally perfect because possessing all the faculties God gave him he used them legitimately, being correct always in his knowledge, uniform in his obedience, and genuine in his love.[37] "And, to crown all, he was immortal."[38] He was made that he might know and enjoy and serve God forever.[39] Coeval with his nature he was given a law, "a complete model of all truth, so far as is intelligible to a finite being."[40] This Adamic law was the law of works, the same in substance as the angelic law, common to angels and to men.[41] His powers and abilities being exactly as God would have them, he was required to exercise them to the glory of God. "Consequently, this law, proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able so to do: and God could not but require the service he was able to

[30] *Ibid.*, VI, 208.
[31] *Ibid.*, II, 50, 69; V, 559; VI, 512.
[32] *Ibid.*, II, 50.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid.*, II, 69, 71.
[35] *Ibid.*, II, 50.
[36] *Ibid.*, I, 326–327.
[37] *Ibid.*, II, 50.
[38] *Ibid.*, II, 51.
[39] *Ibid.*, I, 307.
[40] *Ibid.*, I, 307.
[41] *Ibid.*, I, 307–308; VI, 512.

pay."[42] In this law he was to continue until his trial on earth was ended.[43]

Not only was Adam created perfect in his moral and spiritual nature, but also in his physical nature. He was clothed with physical immortality and incorruption, and knew no bodily weakness or sickness as he knew no sin. Although he was formed out of the dust of the earth, he was yet free from all seeds of decay.[44] His physical nature was at the service of his moral and spiritual natures, and did not clog them, but worked in harmony and accord with them.[45]

Such was "the original nature of mankind, when it was first 'brought into being.'"[46] It is quite beside the purpose of this study to criticize Wesley's theology; but one cannot let pass such a highly imaginative picture of man without at least saying that there is no just ground in Scripture for it. The only references that could possibly be used as a support—and these would be strained to the breaking point if so used—are the statements that God created man in his own image, and that after he had finished he saw that what he had created was good.

It is hardly necessary to assert that Wesley meant a very different thing by the term "original nature" from the content given it by modern psychology, as, for instance, in Thorndike's book on *The Original Nature of Man.* According to modern terminology, original nature means man's uneducated equipment, his nature independent of post-natal nurture. Wesley meant by it man's nature as it came from God in the first parents, prior to their fall into disobedience of God's law. What is known according to modern psychology as original nature Wesley covers by the term "our present corrupt nature."[47]

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[42] *Ibid.*, VI, 513, 739.

[43] *Ibid.*, I, 45.

[44] *Ibid.*, VII, 583. This reference is to the preface to the first edition of Wesley's Work, "*Primitive Physick: or, An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases.*" The full text is found in Vol. 25 of *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, Bristol, 1771–1774, 32 Vols.

[45] *Ibid.*, VI, 512.

[46] *Ibid.*, V, 543.

[47] *Ibid.*, V, 543.

After the Fall Adam had a corrupt nature. He was created "able to stand and yet liable to fall."[48] The very possibility of falling into sin was one of the liabilities of his freedom as a moral agent. And the design of his trial and probation was to test his ability to stand. But when the devil tempted him, he yielded, rebelling against the law of God and willfully and deliberately violating it. "By this willful act of disobedience to his Creator, this flat rebellion against his Sovereign, he openly declared that he would no longer have God to rule over him; that he would be governed by his own will, and not the will of Him that created him; and that he would not seek his happiness in God, but in the world, in the works of his hands."[49] Whereupon the punishment that was threatened if he disobeyed was inflicted upon him, and in that day he lost his original nature and suffered physically and spiritually.

His body began to die and became subject to weakness and sickness, which inevitably lead to physical death.[50] From that time it became unable to cooperate with his moral and spiritual natures, but pressed down both his mind and his soul and became a heavy drag upon them, serving them at best but imperfectly.[51] Furthermore, he suffered the most dreadful of all possible deaths, the death of his soul. Being separated from God, he lost the image of God and the life of God in his soul.[52] Righteousness and holiness departed from him, and he became unholy, full of sin and guilt and tormenting fears, incapable any longer of loving God or desiring him.[53] He not only lost altogether the moral image of God, but also in part the natural image of him.[54] His understanding became darkened so that his knowledge of God became dim and vague.[55] His heart also, being turned from God, followed its own bent and will.[56] And his liberty became so impaired that it was from that time free only to choose evil.

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[48] *Ibid.*, I, 400.
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*, II, 71; VII, 583. Also, *Primitive Physick*, 4.
[51] *Ibid.*, II, 34.
[52] *Ibid.*, I, 400–401; II, 71.
[53] *Ibid.*, II, 71.
[54] *Ibid.*, II, 36.
[55] *Ibid.*, I, 401.
[56] *Ibid.*, II, 70, 73.

II. The Effect of Original Sin Upon the Human Race

But Adam's sin was not limited to himself, since, in addition to being the father of the race, he was the federal head, the first representative of mankind, or a public person, as the Assembly's Larger Catechism defines him, in whom all mankind were contained.[57] "The greatest aggravation of his sin was, that he *involved all his posterity* in sin and ruin by it. He could not but know that he stood as a public person, and that his disobedience would be fatal to all his seed; and if so, it was certainly the greatest treachery and the greatest cruelty that ever was."[58] The entire human race, including its youngest members, being dependent upon his behavior, fell in his fall and have ever since suffered the most deplorable effects.[59] Original sin was transmitted to them and the guilt of his sin was imputed to them.[60] The sentence pronounced upon him included all evils that could befall the souls and bodies of his posterity. That which characterized Adam's state after his fall is the condition of mankind ever since, a fallen state.[61] More precisely, the imputation of Adam's sin means that the bodies of men become mortal, their souls suffer the death of disunion from God and are sinful and devilish, and liable to eternal death.[62] Wesley bases these arguments, as arguments on this head are usually based, upon Paul's teaching in Romans 5. 12-20 and 1 Corinthians 15. 21-22, that in Adam all die, by one man sin came into the world, etc.[63] He admitted his uncertainty as to the method by which original sin is transmitted, believing it was not especially important to know, so long as there is no doubt of the truth of the transmission. He is of the opinion, however, that it is handed down by natural generation through the blood unity of the race with Adam.[64]

Wesley also infers the imputation of Adam's guilt from the fact of the sufferings of the human race. In both adults and

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[57] *Ibid.*, I, 46; II, 36; V, 539, 588–589.
[58] Wesley: *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, I, 7.
[59] *Works*, II, 36; V, 539, 540, 548–549.
[60] *Ibid.*, V, 539–540.
[61] *Ibid.*, VII, 113.
[62] *Ibid.*, V, 195–196.
[63] *Ibid.*, V, 524.
[64] *Ibid.*, V, 539, 549.

infants these sufferings are of the nature of punishments. Just as the sins of the race were imputed to Christ and he was punished for them, although he did not commit them, so the sin of Adam is imputed to the race with all the sufferings consequent upon it.[65] Obviously, God does not look upon infants any more than adults as innocent, otherwise he would not inflict upon them the punishment of physical sickness and death and moral estrangement from himself.[66] "They suffer; therefore, they deserve to suffer."[67]

It is not to be understood, however, that this punishment for original sin includes the eternal death of the soul in the same way as it does the physical death of the body. "I believe none ever did, or ever will, die eternally, merely for the sin of our first father."[68] The connection of eternal death with original sin is but indirect. Only if because of original sin men commit actual sin, which is the inevitable outcome if it is left to take its course, will the souls of men perish. A distinction is to be made, therefore, between infants and adults. Obviously, infants are incapable of preventing themselves from sin and of availing themselves of any measures for their redemption. "No infant ever was, or ever will be, 'sent to hell for the guilt of Adam's sin,' seeing it is canceled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they are sent into the world."[69] All others will escape the condemnation for Adam's sin only on condition that they avail themselves of the righteousness of Christ, which will be imputed to them on condition and from the time that they believe.[70] This righteousness, which comes as a free gift to everyone born into the world, is unto salvation to those of riper years, who are inevitably sinners, only on condition that they fulfill the requirements of its application. And unless they do, they will be damned eternally.[71]

Wesley constantly views the condition of human nature brought about by Adam's sin in terms of disease. He diagnoses

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[65] *Ibid.*, VI, 722.
[66] *Ibid.*, V, 577, 579.
[67] *Ibid.*, V, 579.
[68] *Ibid.*, V, 577.
[69] *Ibid.*, VII, 97.
[70] *Ibid.*, I, 171.
[71] *Ibid.*, V, 528

it through a physician's eyes and describes it with a physician's vocabulary. "The whole world is, indeed, in its present state, only one great infirmary. All that are therein are sick of sin; and their one business is to be healed."[72] The diseased condition of the body aggravates the faculties of the soul and makes them unfit for right action.[73] For the soul sympathizes with the body and is sensitive to its distempers.[74] Being inextricably joined to a diseased body and forced to dwell in it until death, the soul cannot do as it would either in thought, speech, or action, but is pressed down and well-nigh submerged and hindered in its more exact operations.[75] The faculty of the understanding is especially disabled. As it plays upon the body as on an instrument of material keys, thinking can be no better than the nature and state of the body.[76] Hence the apprehension is indistinct, the judgment false, and the reasoning wrong in countless instances.[77] And since to guide and enlighten the will and liberty is the particular function of the understanding, every mistake that it makes leads naturally to a mistake in practice.[78] Certain spiritual ailments are therefore "a natural effect of the disordered machine, which proportionably disorders the mind."[79] By these combined circumstances the body is not able to live up to the soul, nor the soul to coerce the body. Such is the condition of human spirits dependent upon mortal bodies.[80]

Wesley's belief in the baneful effects of a diseased body upon the mind and soul arouses one's speculation concerning his extended philanthropic labors to relieve sickness. For twenty-six or -seven years he made anatomy and physic (the eighteenth century term for medicine) the diversion of his leisure hours.[81] While in America he assumed among his other duties the office of medical missionary. In England he conducted several dispensaries for the needy sick and made other practical provisions for their relief.[82] He appointed in the Methodist Societies "Visitors

[72] *Ibid.*, II, 545.
[73] *Ibid.*, V, 559.
[74] *Ibid.*, I, 420.
[75] *Ibid.*, II, 34; VI, 513.
[76] *Ibid.*, II, 34; VII, 54.
[77] *Ibid.*, V, 559.
[78] *Ibid.*, II, 34; VI, 513.
[79] *Ibid.*, VII, 54.
[80] *Ibid.*, II, 34.
[81] *Ibid.*, V, 187.
[82] *Ibid.*, For full account, see North: *Early Methodist Philanthropy*, 36–46.

of the Sick," a measure that proved to be of great good in a period when expert medical service, especially among the poor, was generally lacking.[83] During his lifetime he published five different medical treatises, original and extracted from other authors, chief among which he rated his own work called *Primitive Physick: or, An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases.* This work, he wrote in a pastoral letter, "if you had any regard for your bodies or your children, ought to be in every house."[84] The question naturally arises after an acquaintance with the extent of his medical labors whether he was not motivated by something besides a deep solicitude for the physical welfare of men. To be sure, he was moved by sheer human compassion for people suffering from any trouble whatever, and it should not be suggested that if there were no other reason he would have withheld these labors. But it still remains that he conceived his mission to be something more vital than physical welfare work. It was to cure the disease of sin and to bring salvation to the souls of men. Anything, therefore, that could be done toward making people physically well would, according to his view of the relation of the body to the soul, further the cause of salvation. This may have been one of the ulterior reasons for his interest in medicine.

But Wesley holds that the soul is hindered in its operations not simply because it is oppressed by its habitation in a mortal body, but also because it is itself sick by nature. It brings with it into the world certain *inbred diseases.* The more fundamental of these diseases, from which all others spring, are four: *atheism, pride, love of the world,* and *self-will.*[85] These Wesley describes as "those parent sins."[86] Inasmuch as children are included in the misery caused by Adam's disobedience, they share these diseases with adults. In fact, inasmuch as original sin is transmitted by natural generation, all who come into the world are

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[83] *Ibid.*, V, 186–187.
[84] *Journal*, V, 31, note 2, cited by editor.
[85] *Works*, I, 287, 392–397; II, 475.
[86] *Ibid.*, I, 287.

from their very birth tainted with these diseases of sin. Wesley's sermon "On the Education of Children" describes these diseases in their bearing upon children, and they are seen to be the same as those to which he refers constantly when speaking of adults. The similarity is brought out sharply in a comparison of this sermon with that on "Original Sin." Both speak of these diseases as being in man "by nature." Man brings them with him into the world at birth. The passages relating to them could be exchanged from one sermon to the other without doing damage to either discourse. There are several diseases described in the sermon "On the Education of Children" which are not mentioned in the sermon on "Original Sin." These are *anger, a deviation from truth, a proneness to speak or act contrary to justice,* and *unmercifulness.* It is not to be imagined that Wesley believed them to be limited solely to children. The very term "by nature" makes this clear. He does charge adults with them, and in scathing terms.[87] But in these cases he speaks of them as branches of the parent sins. No other reason than this is evident for leaving them out of his sermon on "Original Sin." The description of these diseases here to follow will be for the most part a synthesis from these two sermons.[88]

The meaning of each disease of human nature goes back to the experience of Adam and becomes clear in that light.[89] By nature *man is an atheist.* Naturally, he has no knowledge of God, no more idea of him or acquaintance with him than the beasts of the field. It is true that he acquires by inference through reflection and education the conception of an eternal, powerful Creator; but he is far removed from any intimate knowledge of him. Nor could he have by his natural understanding, for such knowledge of the Father comes only through the revelation of his Son, Jesus Christ. As a consequence, he has no love for God nor fear of him, as these depend upon a knowledge of him. Wherever such fear and love are found, they are acquired by conversation or example. In many people not even the knowledge of

[87] *Ibid.*, I, 65, 193–198; II, 345–346, 475–476.
[88] *Ibid.*, I, 392–399; II, 307–316.
[89] *Ibid.*, II, 70.

God as Creator exists. Through general perversity of mind, God is separated from his creation, which is believed to exist and have life without his sustaining power. This is "a kind of practical atheism."[90]

Another insidious disease is *pride*. Instead of worshiping God, man is an idolater and worships himself. He thereby robs God of what is due him and usurps his glory, instead of thinking of himself humbly as he ought to think. The reminder that it was chiefly pride that led to the fall of the angels from heaven and turned them into devils makes one sufficiently aware of the fatal character of this disease.

The disease of *self-will* is the twin sister of pride and with it bears the image of the devil. It is a question which of the two is the more fatal distemper. The sinful character of self-will is the refusal of the one who has it to consider the will of God as the supreme regulative rule of life, and instead to indulge his own will, the leaning and bent of his sinful affections and passions. It was this disease that contributed so largely to Adam's disobedience of the law of God.

Through atheism, and pride, and the indulgence of one's own will it is easy to fall into the disease, *the love of the world*. Having no knowledge of God and consequently no fear of him or love of him, man naturally seeks happiness in earthly and sensual things. This disease has three symptoms or evidences. First, there is a tendency in man to gratify the low desires and pleasures of the flesh and to seek happiness in them. Man is dominated and led captive by sensual appetites to such an extent that it may be doubted whether the beasts are not his superiors. A second symptom is the desire of the eye, the propensity to crave the pleasures of the imagination by the sight of great and beautiful and uncommon objects. A third symptom is the pride of life, the natural desire for honor and high esteem and applause. The possession of riches is regarded as the chief means to such honor. The sinfulness of the pride of life is the refusal to seek one's honor and praise solely in God by pleasing him.

Such are the fatal diseases of human nature born with every

[90] *Ibid.*, I, 202.

soul that comes into the world. Taken together, they constitute a "carnal mind," an infection spreading over the soul like a creeping vine leading to every other branch of sin.[91] It is a state of inward, moral disorder, a condition of heart that is "inward hell."[92] Its very inwardness lends propriety to its designation as disease.

These are the diseases that are mentioned in both sermons. It remains to speak of the sins that are mentioned besides these in the sermon "On the Education of Children"—anger, a deviation from the truth, a proneness to speak or act contrary to justice, and unmercifulness. They are almost self-explanatory. *Anger* is primarily the desire for revenge for personal injury. Although it is "short madness," it is real insanity while it lasts. The disease of *deviation from truth* covers all open falsehood, all departures from simplicity, all efforts to dissimulate and appear what one is not. The tendency to *speak or act contrary to justice* causes one to be partial to himself and whenever possible to consult his own interest and pleasure more than strict justice would allow. The last disease mentioned is *unmercifulness,* the way of dealing with people and all living creatures unkindly and as we would not like to have them deal with us.

III. The Relation Between Original Sin and Actual Sin

From original sin spring most if not all actual sins.[93] Herein lies its seriousness and the necessity of taking account of it. Human nature, by the combinations of these deep-rooted and insidious diseases, is biased wholly toward evil and is forced naturally to prefer evil and to choose it from the good. Wesley's broad survey of human conditions in every country and every age led him to ask: "How is it, that, in all ages, the scale has turned the wrong way, with regard to every man born into the world?" "How comes it, that all men under the sun should choose evil rather than good?"[94] The answer is that given by Augustine—that human nature inherits a bias to evil. Ante-

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[91] *Ibid.*, I, 398.
[92] *Ibid.*, VI, 36.
[93] *Ibid.*, V, 548.
[94] *Ibid.*, V, 593.

cedent to any preference in the matter, the individual is inclined to choose evil rather than good.[95] It is not to be accounted for by habit formation due to wrong training in youth, although it is true that habits are contracted from a vicious environment. This condition would, indeed, be lessened together with the consequent wickedness of the world if parents were virtuous and realized their duty of raising their children virtuously. The bias is not merely the infection children receive from their immediate parents, although this is, indeed, a part of it.[96] The disorder is caused by something more deeply rooted than evil training, for it asserts itself long before there has been opportunity for children to contract evil habits.[97] Wesley quotes Doctor Watts with approval on this point, that children "are strongly inclined to evil, long before ill habits can be contracted."[98] This condition of a bias is observable in children before they are even two years old.[99] And the children of even careful parents, despite discipline, show evidences of the beginnings of passions and appetites that are obviously evil.[100] The consequence is that children are born lacking a fair start toward that life of holiness for which God intended them.[101]

The truth that Wesley is here stating and is so much concerned with, by reason of its great importance to his system, is that sin is not limited to the individual will. He wishes to make clear that the individual is estranged from God, not simply by his own personal acts of disobedience, but altogether apart from them and prior to them, by something deeper, by some evil inherent in his very nature.

He does not neglect the conception brought to such prominence by modern psychology of the inheritance of sin through the social environment. In a passage in which he almost breaks out into a challenge to the Almighty, he says: "How many are, from their very infancy, hedged in with such relations, that seem to have no chance (as some speak), no possibility, of being useful

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[95] *Ibid.*, V, 548, 562, 586, 593.
[96] *Ibid.*, V, 562.
[97] *Ibid.*, V, 562–563.
[98] *Ibid.*, V, 586.
[99] *Ibid.*, V, 519.
[100] *Ibid*, V, 563, 567, 585–586.
[101] *Ibid.*, V, 536–537.

to themselves or others? Why are they, antecedent to their own choice, entangled in such connections? Why are hurtful people so cast in their way that they know not how to escape them? And why are useful persons hid out of their sight, or snatched away from them at their utmost need? O God, how unsearchable are thy counsels! . . . Nothing is more sure than that so vast a majority of mankind are, so far as we can judge, cut off from all means, all possibility of holiness, even from their mother's womb. What possibility is there that a Hottentot, a New Zealander, or an inhabitant of Nova Zembla, if he lives and dies there, should ever know what holiness means? or, consequently, ever attain it? . . . As soon as he is born into the world he is absolutely in the power of his savage parents and relations, who, from the first dawn of reason, train him up in the same ignorance, atheism, and barbarity with themselves. He has no chance, so to speak, he has no possibility of any better education. What trial has he then? From the time he comes into the world till he goes out of it again, he seems to be under a dire necessity of living in all ungodliness and unrighteousness. But how is this? How can this be the case with so many millions of the souls that God has made? Art thou not 'the God of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad seas'?"[102]

Wesley is also aware of the grave dangers of an evil environment to those who have it in their power to flee from it. This is clearly set forth in two sermons he placed together in his collected sermons: "On Friendship with the World" and "In What Sense We Are to Leave the World."[103] The gist of the thought therein contained is that friendship with the world is sinful because it throws one into evil companionships, which make easy the committing of actual sins and spread the infection of the diseases of nature. The very spirit of wicked people is infectious, and spiritual diseases are caught almost as easily as physical. Just as there is an atmosphere surrounding every human body, inescapable by those about it, so the human spirit has an atmosphere carrying inescapable contagion of pride, self-suffi-

[102] *Ibid.*, II, 123–124.
[103] *Ibid.*, II, 196–212.

ciency, and other spiritual distempers.[164] Christian people should therefore keep as far as possible from all ungodly men, should avoid needless intercourse and contact with them. For vice is of such an infectious character that it can even renew the bias of nature which a Christian has begun to conquer.[165]

The reason Wesley does not speak more fully of social heredity in its wider aspects is not, then, due to any blindness on his part to its significance, as the foregoing amply shows. He was interested in spreading the truth that the cause of human degeneracy is inherent in human nature, and not merely due to the fact that we are born into an evil civilization that shapes us inescapably without our consent and prior to our ability to withstand it. Folk are enlisted into the battle of life with weakened natures, constitutions not only susceptible to sin and liable to diseases, but already infected with diseases of sin in advanced stages, which logically and inevitably form a bent and bias of nature.

The significance of this diseased state of nature is that it inclines the individual to commit actual sins. It is for actual sins of word and thought and deed as distinguished from original sin that the individual is to be condemned. He is not responsible for the nature that is so constituted that it leads him into sin, but for permitting it to lead him without taking the available measures to withstand and overcome it. Adam is responsible for the original sin, for the infection of the individual's nature; but the individual himself is responsible when through his own fault he commits actual outward and inward sins, and for these he will be liable to punishment in the next world.[166] But so long as he wars against his nature, so that it does not have dominion over him, he is free from condemnation. In keeping with this distinction between the infection of nature and the evil deeds that are due to it is Wesley's definition of sin. "Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God."[167] As original sin will not be exterminated from the world until the end of the world,[168] the inward state of sin will

[164] *Ibid.*, II, 200–201.
[165] *Ibid.*, II, 208–209.
[166] *Ibid.*, V, 556.
[167] *Ibid.*, VII, 56.
[168] *Ibid.*, VI, 76.

persist in every individual, even in the heart of the believer and the regenerate.[109] The seeds of pride and anger and self-will and evil desires and sins of every other kind will continue in his heart, and he will feel more or less of them springing up within him. He will experience wandering thoughts and coldness of affection toward God. He will be unable to prevent involuntary transgressions, or sins of surprise through sudden and violent and unforeseen temptations.[110] But only his voluntary transgressions will be counted against him. The rest, the inward state and sins naturally arising from it, will not be reckoned as actual sin unless he gives way to them consciously and willfully, unless they have the concurrence of his will.[111]

IV. The Extent of Depravity

As to Wesley's belief in the extent of depravity, it is possible to take contradictory positions. Stevens holds that Wesley disliked the phrase "total depravity," but that he nevertheless agreed with the usual definition given it.[112] Workman points out that it was the early Methodist doctrine, but that in later times it has been quite widely relinquished.[113] McConnell says that it does not belong essentially to the Methodist theology.[114] As a matter of fact, it is difficult to be sure of Wesley's opinion on this point. Certain of his statements do not admit of any other interpretation than that he believed depravity to be absolute. Others seem to give room in his system to partial depravity. But if human nature has been committed to an exact resemblance of Adam's nature after his fall, it cannot be other

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[109] *Ibid.*, I, 108ff; V, 276.

[110] *Ibid.*, I, 71–73.

[111] *Ibid.*, I, 16, 74.

[112] Stevens: *A History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, Called Methodism.* II, 409.

[113] *A New History of Methodism*, edited by Townsend, Workman, and Eayrs, I, 52–53. This reference is to the Introduction of this monumental history written by Workman. It was published separately in revised and expanded form as *"The Place of Methodism in the Catholic Church."* It is referred to in this essay in its first form as a part of the *New History of Methodism*, unless otherwise indicated.

[114] McConnell, *The Essentials of Methodism*, 12, 27.

than utterly depraved, for such his became, as has been shown. Wesley makes it the distinguishing mark between Christianity and heathenism, that the first believes in "the entire depravation of the whole of human nature, of every man born into the world, in every faculty of his soul, not so much by those particular vices which reign in particular persons, as by the general flood of atheism and idolatry, of pride, self-will, and love of the world. This, therefore, is the first, grand, distinguishing point between heathenism and Christianity. The one acknowledges that many men are infected with many vices, and even born with a proneness to them; but supposes withal, that in some that natural good much overbalances the evil; the other declares that all men are 'conceived in sin,' and 'shapen in wickedness'—that hence there is in every man a 'carnal mind, which is enmity against God, which is not, cannot be subject to his law;' and which so infects that whole soul, that 'there dwelleth in him, in his flesh,' in his natural state, 'no good thing'; but 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil,' only evil, and that 'continually.'" "All who deny this, call it original sin, or by any other title, are heathens still, in the fundamental point which differences heathenism from Christianity."[115] Of the faculties of the soul, the will seems to be the one singled out particularly by Wesley as utterly depraved. Although Adam before his fall possessed natural free-will to choose either good or evil, no man since has that power in matters pertaining to the religious life.[116] The will is free by nature only to choose evil.[117] It is wholly inclined to indulge the inherited corruption.[118] Only in concerns that lie outside of religion does man have freedom of will. Entire alienation, then, from the life of God is this view.

Over against the view that human nature is totally depraved must be placed the frequent remarks that limit depravity. Here it would seem Wesley's division of human nature into the moral image of God and the natural image, with all that this distinction implies, makes it possible to assert that he believed in both total and partial depravity. There is no doubt in his mind that so

[115] *Works*, I, 397–398.
[116] *Ibid.*, VI, 127.
[117] *Ibid.*, VI, 156.
[118] *Ibid.*, I, 428.

far as the character of the individual is concerned it is utterly lacking in likeness to God's character, that is, in holiness and righteousness. He does leave an opening, however, for the belief that on the individual's spiritual side, in that part of him which in Adam was the natural image of God, he is only partially depraved. "Some remains of the natural image of God, as we are spiritual and immortal beings, are even now to be found in every man."[119] In the sermon on "The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels," which Wesley begins by describing human nature as wholly degraded, he says that a considerable portion of the lost image of God may be regained, although the vessel that contains this will stay none the less earthen in its character. But there will be already in human nature, when the recoverable image returns to it, a nucleus of divinity to which it will join itself. This is the remains of the lost image and it is in the individual before ever he becomes a Christian believer. "May we not include herein, first, an immaterial principle, a spiritual nature, endued with understanding, and affections, and a degree of liberty; of a self-moving, yea, and self-governing power? . . . And, secondly, all that is vulgarly called natural conscience? Implying some discernment of the difference between moral good and evil, with an approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other, by an inward monitor, excusing or accusing?" He has no doubt, we may conclude, that some remnants of the understanding and affections and liberty are natural to every child of man; but he is uncertain whether conscience is "natural or superadded by the grace of God."[120] At any rate, it does not necessarily follow that because men are deeply fallen as to their understanding, will, and affections, there may not be enough reason left to be able to discern good from evil.[121] In fact, every spirit must possess these three faculties, in some measure, to be a spirit. "It may be doubted whether God ever made an intellectual creature without all these three faculties; whether any spirit ever existed without them; yea, whether they are not

[119] *Ibid.*, V, 587.
[120] *Ibid.*, II, 479.
[121] *Ibid.*, V, 561.

implied in the very nature of a spirit. Certain it is, that no being can be accountable for its actions, which has not liberty, as well as understanding."[122] The tract, "Thoughts Upon Necessity," from which this quotation is taken, has in its introductory word to the reader the following: "I cannot believe the noblest creature in the visible world to be only a fine piece of clock-work." In this tract Wesley specifies his objections to determinism and gives his typical reasons for holding to free-will. If all man's thoughts and deeds are so of necessity, that is, irresistibly, there can be no moral good or evil. Man would be incapable of vice or virtue, and could not be subject to rewards or punishments on any scale that is just. Future judgment would be done away with, and finally the divine origin of the Scriptures disproved.[123] In other words, moral obligation, punishment and reward, heaven and hell, imply freedom of the will. In short, man would not be man at all without it.[124]

V. The Work of Grace in the Salvation of Man

It is not a matter of great importance, after all, to his theory of salvation and education, whether partial depravity can or cannot be given room in his theology. For whether or not man has some good in him by nature, as the basis of his redemption, he is under the dispensation of grace, which is universal and efficacious in supplying whatever deficiency may be owing to fallen nature. A discussion of the work of grace, as Wesley conceived it, in the life of man is complicated by his belief that the influence of grace extends over every point in human life from its very birth. For Wesley taught that not only is salvation due to grace, but that the creation of Adam and the life of all people and their strength and everything they possess is due to the same power. Salvation is distinguished from the general life of the individual only by being the very highest blessing in the power of grace to confer.[125] From the very hour of the original promise made after the fall of Adam mankind has been under the cove-

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[122] *Ibid.*, VI, 208.
[123] *Ibid.*, VI, 200–212.
[124] *Ibid.*, II, 76.
[125] *Ibid.*, I, 13.

nant of grace.[126] From these statements it is readily evident that one has to be on his guard in reading Wesley when he is using the phrase "by nature." It would seem that he is dealing with an abstraction. "There is no man that is in a state of mere nature," for no one is entirely without the grace of God unless he has irretrievably quenched the Spirit.[127] McGiffert has suggested that Wesley and the evangelicals did not teach the immanence of God in a very strict sense, that while they emphasized that in the hearts and lives of believers the Spirit was immediately present, they denied it most emphatically to nature and humanity in general. The divine indwelling is enjoyed only by those possessing saving faith.[128] What McGiffert says may be true with regard to the evangelicals taken as a whole; but its application to Wesley should be made cautiously, for statements similar to those to be found grouped together in his sermon "On the Omnipresence of God" might be gathered together by the investigator from all quarters of his writings. There it is stated that God is "presiding over all that he has made, and governing atoms as well as worlds." "We cannot believe the omnipotence of God, unless we believe his omnipresence, for seeing, as was observed before, nothing can act where it is not; if there were any space where God was not present, he would not be able to do anything there. Therefore to deny the omnipresence of God implies, likewise, the denial of his omnipotence. To set bounds to the one is, undoubtedly, to set bounds to the other also. Indeed, wherever we suppose him not to be, there we suppose all his attributes to be in vain. He cannot exercise there, either his justice, or mercy; either his power or wisdom."[129] Such a statement as this ought to be effective answer also to the opinion that Wesley's thinking was based on the deistic assumption that God having created the world in the beginning stood apart from it and let it run by its self-operative laws, and revealed himself only by miraculous intervention. Such an intervention is con-

[126] *Ibid.*, V, 204.

[127] *Ibid.*, II, 238; see also I, 110–115.

[128] McGiffert: *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, 171–172. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[129] *Works*, II, 413–414.

version.[130] On the contrary, the only way in which it could be said truthfully that conversion is an intervention is to say that God's indwelling presence in the entire universe together with whatever relation he has to it, is an intervention. And this might justly be held on his conception of grace. But in that case it would be unfair—or at least redundant—to speak of particular interventions, as, for instance, conversion.

The point to be kept in sight in this discussion is that regardless of Wesley's views on the extent of depravity, the force of it is checked by the logical outcome of his belief in grace and in its universal efficacy. This is the heart of Wesley's Arminianism.[131] Human nature is not determined by necessity, nor is the propensity to evil irresistible. By the grace ever available this can be resisted and conquered.[132] Every person possesses the principle of self-determination and is a free agent, without which he would be "not an agent, but a patient."[133] This means not only that a man is free to choose God, but also that he is not forced by God to make that choice and to believe and be saved. He is a free agent every way. God desires the salvation of every soul and has fulfilled all the necessary divine conditions, flooding the world with light. But he leaves it to everyone to see it for himself and to draw nigh to it unforced.[134] This fact of freedom to choose or reject salvation is evidence enough of a check by grace to total ruin and depravity.

Wesley was aware that such a view of self-determination is not easy to reconcile with the foreknowledge possessed by God of all who throughout time would accept or reject salvation. And he confessed he could not reconcile it.[135] All that he could say was that God's knowledge could not be the cause of any individual's attitude toward salvation. "Men are as free in believing, or not believing, as if he did not know it at all."[136] Likewise,

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[130] McConnell, *op. cit.*, 17., disagrees with the Author's position.

[131] Dale, *Fellowship With Christ and Other Discourses Delivered on Special Occasions*, 224; *A New History of Methodism*, I, 36–37.

[132] *Works*, V, 562.

[133] *Ibid.*, II, 69.

[134] *Ibid.*, II, 98, 460.

[135] *Ibid.*, V, 592.

[136] *Ibid.*, II, 39.

the power wherewith good and evil actions are performed is directly of God, but this does not make the sinfulness or the goodness of the deeds God's will or work. It is the use man makes of this power from his own free-will that characterizes him as sinful or righteous.[137] So that although Wesley cannot explain this seeming paradox, he nevertheless feels certain that God cannot be the author of sin, which he would be were man determined beforehand, and not free.[138] And on the basis of this feeling he retains belief in freedom. For just as he knows that primary and secondary qualities, for instance, color as well as size and figure, are real, by the testimony of his senses, so he knows man to be free by the same sort of testimony. If man is a mere machine, none of his senses can be trusted, for it is the testimony of all of them, both outward and inward, that he is a free agent. If, therefore, he cannot trust them with respect to freedom, he cannot trust them respecting anything, not even primary or secondary qualities, and the only possible outcome is universal skepticism.[139]

The denial of some offset to depravity, whether by nature or of grace, leads to Calvinistic determinism, in which election by hard-and-fast decrees shifts responsibility for salvation wholly from the individual and rests it solely upon God. And the ground is entirely cut loose from aspiration and education. These become, as Doctor Workman points out, utterly impossible. "For," he says, "if all is immutable decrees, there is neither need nor logic in prayer or worship; these things are but the idle beating of the wings against the prison bars."[140] Likewise the conception of conversion as a voluntary act of self-surrender would be impossible. Nor would there be any justification for attempting the work of education, when that is defined as a leading out of latent possibilities for good. For the less one's beastliness were permitted to develop, the better it would be on such a view of the world. His possibilities were better kept in chains. But if some spark of divinity is to be found within the individual sufficient to enable him to see his own darkness and desire more

[137] *Ibid.*, V, 592.
[138] *Ibid.*, VI, 204–205.
[139] *Ibid.*, VI, 210–211.
[140] *A New History of Methodism*, I, 11.

light, the way would be opened for conversion and for education. Wesley held to such a conception. Although human beings are by nature utterly corrupt, there is sufficient grace in every man given by the Spirit to start him off toward a quest for the higher life. He held that a great deal is left to the individual in finding salvation, although at the same time man's utter dependence upon God is to be kept constantly in mind. "It is a fact," says a modern writer, "that every individual has a rudimentary moral nature derived from God, the Source of all goodness, and that apart from this ethical potentiality, to which appeal can be made, moral influence and training would go for nothing."[141] This statement depicts Wesley's position accurately.

The established name that has been used in the history of doctrine to describe this initial influence of God in the soul of man is prevenient grace. Wesley usually defines it more closely as preventing grace. "Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly), preventing grace; including the first wish to please God; the first dawn of light concerning his will; and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him."[142] It is a feeling and groping after God if haply he might be found. It finds inclusive utterance in Paul's doctrine, which is reiterated in Wesley's writings, that you are to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work."[143] Wesley's exegesis of these verses is that grace accompanies and follows our desires, but also goes before them and prevents them, so that it is God who works in us to desire the right.[144] In a letter to John Mason, one of his preachers, he gives his opinion on this point. Evidently, from the nature of Wesley's reply to him, Mason has been troubled about the problem of election. Wesley writes: "One of Mr. Fletcher's Checks considers at large the Calvinistic supposition, 'that a natural man is *as dead as a stone;*' and shows the utter falseness and absurdity of it: seeing no man

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[141] Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative*, 86.
[142] *Works*, II, 235–236; see also VI, 509.
[143] Philippians, II, 12–13.
[144] *Works*, V, 574.

living is without some preventing grace; and every degree of grace is a degree of life."[145] Wesley felt that sovereignty was not at all taken from God, the point so much valued in Calvinism.[146] Sovereignty is, rather, attributed to God, in the only rational way, permitting at the same time a conception of him which retains belief in his justice and mercy. Wesley could hold to the sovereignty of God only on the condition that it was not separated from his other attributes, chiefly his justice and his mercy.[147]

That which is more properly termed preventing grace is more popularly known, in the life of one before he becomes a Christian, as natural conscience. To call it this is, however, unjust, for it is not natural but supernatural, a gift from God, and is superior to all man's natural endowments.[148] Conscience "is a kind of silent reasoning of the mind," he says, quoting from a seventeenth-century sermon.[149] It is "the light of reason."[150] "And does it not appear as soon as the understanding opens? as soon as reason begins to dawn?" In a Christian its office is to give assurance to the good life.[151] But in one not yet a Christian it is preventing grace and leads the way to his becoming a Christian. And it is the possession of every man. "Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Everyone has, sooner or later, good desires; although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root, or produce any considerable fruit. Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And everyone, unless he be one of the small number, whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no

[145] *Ibid.*, VII, 97. This refers to the saintly John Fletcher (1729–1785), gifted theologian and one of Wesley's ablest preachers. Wesley indicated him to be his successor as leader of the Methodists, a wish not realized because of his prior death. See *Works*, VI, 687–688.

[146] *Ibid.*, VI, 42–45.

[147] *Ibid.*, VI, 35. See also sermon on "Free Grace," I, 482–490.

[148] *Ibid.*, II, 378.

[149] *Ibid.*, II, 377.

[150] *Ibid.*, I, 250.

[151] *Ibid.*, II, 376–383.

man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."[152]

Summing up Wesley's position, it may be said that he believed in the depravity of human nature but at the same time joined to it an ameliorating doctrine of grace whereby every man born into the world is enabled to sense his pitiable condition, to sigh for deliverance, and to make a start toward it. Viewed from its origin in the Fall, character might have been hopelessly bad. That it has been otherwise is due to the personal interest of God. Wesley would doubtless agree with Professor Mackintosh that "to whatever point we retrace the story of our personal inclinations and decisions, behind everything else there stretches the prevenient love of God making ready for our good."[153] The whole Christian system is "a universal remedy, for a universal evil."[154] It is "God's method of *healing a soul* which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties."[155] But it is essential to retain the belief in the depravity of man's inmost nature. Otherwise religion is unnecessary as well as education. Only outward reformation would be necessary on any other consideration. The Christian system would fall at once were this foundation to be taken away.[156] There would be no need of a cure or for any medicine if there were not this diseased condition. It would be useless to talk of a renewal in knowledge and holiness if that original condition had never been lost, if man were as good as Adam before his apostasy. And, on the other hand, that religion which does not aim to restore the original condition "is no other than a poor farce."[157] This is true salvation. "By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of

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[152] *Ibid.*, II, 238.
[153] *Divine Initiative*, 40.
[154] *Works*, II, 435.
[155] *Ibid.*, I, 398; see also II, 73.
[156] *Ibid.*, V, 493.
[157] *Ibid.*, I, 399.

God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth."[158]

In fairness to Wesley—although it is somewhat out of line with the purpose of this study—over against the trend of the argument in this chapter should be placed several of his scientific views as contained in the work by Bonnet, which he edited and circulated under the title, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation:* or, *A Compendium of Natural Philosophy.* There can be no doubt that this work in the form issued by Wesley reflects honestly his accepted views, for in the Preface he says: "I have found occasion to retrench, enlarge, or alter every chapter, and almost every section. So that it is now, I believe, not only pure, containing nothing false or uncertain; but as full as any tract can be expected to be: and, likewise plain, clear, and intelligible to one of a tolerable understanding."[159]

This work shows that Wesley accepted in general the revolutionary scientific hypothesis of the solar system of Copernicus and Isaac Newton, and that he rejected the Ptolemaic system. "Demonstrated," are his words, "by unanswerable arguments that it could not possibly be otherwise without the utter subversion of all the laws of nature."[160] It is needless to dwell upon the fact that these views are not in accord with the biblical theory of the system of the heavens. There is no evidence that Wesley attempted to harmonize them.

The attempt has been made recently to prove from statements in this *"Survey"* that Wesley accepted the essential doctrine of organic evolution, namely, the doctrine of the gradual and orderly progression from lower forms to higher in the organic world. This position, it is said, is set forth clearly in the two chapters, "A General View of the Gradual Progression of Beings," and "Continuation of the Gradual Progression of Beings." The following statements are made by him therein: "All is metamorphosis in the physical world. Forms are continually changing. The quantity of matter alone is invariable. The same sub-

[158] *Ibid.*, V, 35.
[159] Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*, Preface.
[160] *Ibid.*, II, 112.

stance passes successively into three kingdoms. The same composition becomes by turns a mineral, plant, insect, reptile, fish, bird, quadruped, man."[161] "By what degrees does nature raise herself up to man? How will she rectify this head that is always inclined toward the earth? How change these paws into flexible arms? What method will she make use of to transform these crooked feet into supple and skillful hands? Or how will she widen and extend this contracted stomach? In what manner will she place the breasts, and give them a roundness suitable to them? The ape is this rough draft of man; this rude sketch an imperfect representation, which nevertheless bears the resemblance to him, and is the last creature that serves to display the admirable progression of the works of God."[162] "But mankind have their gradations, as well as the other productions of our globe. There is a prodigious number of continued links between the most perfect man and the ape."[163]

If Wesley, accepting the evolutionary hypothesis, considered it to be in conflict with the Scripture doctrine of creation, or with theistic philosophy, he failed to record such an opinion anywhere. On the contrary, this method of creation seemed to him to show the wisdom of God, "even the manifold wisdom which is able to answer the same ends by so various means."[164]

These passages should be interpreted in the light of Wesley's writings as a whole, and not Wesley's other voluminous writings in the light of these brief passages. There is not the slightest evidence in anything else he ever wrote that he favored the doctrine of evolution. On the contrary, he asserted consistently his belief in the account in Genesis of the origin and creation of man. It is safe to say, therefore, that in endorsing these statements from Bonnet he did not mean to imply a belief in a process of evolution, Darwinian or otherwise, of one form of life from another. Bishop Warren A. Candler, in a sane article answering

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[161] Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*, II, 226.
[162] *Ibid.*, II, 210.
[163] *Ibid.*, II, 213.
[164] *Ibid.*, Preface.

the attempts to make Wesley an evolutionist, writes: ". . . All that Bonnet taught and all that Wesley accepted was that God had created all things, especially living things, in a series of gradations or scales."[165]

[165] "John Wesley and Evolution." Christian Advocate, General Organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, August 7, 1925, p. 1093.

CHAPTER II

THE SALVATION OF ADULTS

I. Repentance

In Wesley's summary of his doctrinal position, it will be remembered, the porch of religion is original sin, and the door is faith. "The doctrine of original sin, and faith grounded thereon, is the only foundation of true piety."[1] In his ablest theological writing, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,* which Doctor Simon aptly calls his "Apologia,"[2] Wesley justifies the religion he commends on the ground that it is agreeable to reason, if by reason is meant the eternal reason, the essential nature of things, the nature of God and the nature of man. Christianity is suited to the nature of God, for it begins in knowing him and in going on to love him and all mankind. It is also agreeable to the nature of man, for its starting point is the knowledge of what human nature really is—"foolish, vicious, miserable." It points the remedy for this condition and culminates in restoring God and man to their right relations to each other, as Father and son, Lord and servant.[3] The knowledge of God and the knowledge of self represent but two sides of one and the same thing. They are complementary. To know God is to be disillusioned about oneself. To know oneself is to be aware of the deep contrast existing between God and man. Real knowledge of either leads to deep dissatisfaction and striving to achieve redemption. Religion is the love of God and of mankind.[4] You must love him before you can be holy.[5] But you cannot love him until you know he loves you.[6] But before you can know him you must come into touch with Christ. And before you are

[1] *Works,* V, 551.

[2] Simon: *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies,* 153. This is the second volume thus far completed in the life of Wesley which Doctor Simon is now writing and which is to be the standard life of Wesley. The first volume is called *John Wesley and the Religious Societies.*

[3] *Works,* V, 11–12.

[4] *Ibid.,* V, 5.

[5] *Ibid.,* I, 88.

[6] *Ibid.,* V, 20.

willing to do that you must be convinced that you are corrupt. "The power of godliness consists in the love of God and man; this is heavenly and substantial religion. But no man can possibly 'love his neighbor as himself' till he loves God; and no man can possibly love God till he truly believes in Christ; and no man truly believes in Christ till he is deeply convinced of his own sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness. But this no man ever was, neither can be, who does not know he has a corrupt nature."[7] Man since the Fall has been diseased with atheism. He is unable to know God in any but a dim and superficial way. And being unacquainted with the effulgence of the Divine, he takes pride in his own miserable sinful condition as though it were itself magnificent. Unless somehow an awareness of the true state of things can break through his depraved understanding, he will never long for anything better. Self-knowledge, therefore, is the *sine qua non* of the religious life. Without it there can be no salvation. With it salvation is practically inevitable.[8]

Wesley's constant mention of this condition leaves no room to doubt that he considered it important almost above everything else. To know oneself as shapen in wickedness and conceived in sin and as having added to that ever since the ability to discern good from evil, and therefore guilty of eternal death, is to build upon the Rock spoken of in the Sermon on the Mount. For only then will one mourn his condition and appropriate to himself the salvation that is through Christ by faith.[9] Not even the grace of God can have effect in a life which lacks this acquaintance with himself. Wesley criticized the sacraments of the Church of Rome on this score in his tract, *Popery Calmly Considered*. A sacrament is not an act of pure magic through which grace is conferred simply by the performance of the act or by the utterance of words. The being merely passive before the influence of grace, the setting aside of all hindrances to its operation, is not the sole condition. "It is not enough that we do not put an obstruction. In order to our receiving grace, there is also required previous instruction, true repentance, and a degree of faith."[10] A

[7] *Ibid.*, V, 575.
[8] *Ibid.*, VII, 142.
[9] *Ibid.*, I, 304.
[10] *Ibid.*, V, 810.

section from his own experience illustrates what he had in mind when insisting upon the necessity of self-knowledge. From the time of his ordination in 1725 to 1729 he preached much but with little success. The reason he gives is that he took it too much as established that his hearers already believed the gospel and did not need repentance. It was not until he insisted upon the need of tearing away the corrupt foundation of the human heart, and laying Christ down as the only sure base of the religion of the heart, that multitudes cried out for salvation.[11]

It will be remembered that the root of Wesley's objection to Taylor's treatise on the "Doctrine of Original Sin," which set forth the doctrine of human perfection, was that it overthrows the ground on which true spiritual worship and primitive Scriptural Christianity stand, for it blocks the way to the knowledge of the real state men are in.[12] This was also one cause of his dislike for "the great triumvirate," Rousseau, Voltaire, and Hume, and their religion of humanity.[13] So much have men of letters in England, France, and Germany extolled humanity that a revealed religion has been deemed unnecessary. But this religion of humanity is simple atheism.[14] Panegyrics on the dignity of human nature have persuaded people to think well of themselves, to regard themselves as wise, virtuous, and happy, until it is now quite unfashionable to speak at all to the disparagement of human nature.[15] He discloses his opinion of Rousseau, and incidentally of Voltaire, in an entry in his *Journal* after reading an essay on the "Intellectual and Active Powers of Man" by Dr. Thomas Reid, founder of the Scottish School. His greatest objection to that book was the author's "exquisite want of judgment in so admiring that prodigy of self-conceit, Rousseau—a shallow but supercilious infidel, two degrees below Voltaire! Is it possible that a man who admires him can admire the Bible?"[16] Again in his *Journal* of a few years previous he voices the same reaction to his vanity and self-conceit, and his consid-

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[11] *Ibid.*, V, 330–331.
[12] *Ibid.*, V, 649–650; see also *Works*, V, 492–493, and *Journal*, III, 374, 520.
[13] *Ibid.*, II, 433.
[14] *Ibid.*, II, 433.
[15] *Ibid.*, I, 392; II, 473.
[16] *Journal*, VI, 22–23.

eration of Voltaire as belonging to the same category.[17] It would be hardly fair to Wesley to neglect to mention that in these judgments he shared the views of other great men of his generation. Doctor Curnock, the editor of the Standard Edition of Wesley's *Journal,* says that Warburton, the Bishop of Gloucester and Wesley's open enemy, characterized Rousseau as a "frank lunatic."[18] He also says that Dr. Samuel Johnson gave Boswell his opinion that both Voltaire and Rousseau were bad men, and that he never doubted that Rousseau was mad.[19] Although Wesley despised Rousseau, the two men were nevertheless quite near each other on one point. Both were dissatisfied with the present state of society and believed there had been a departure from the ideal conditions in which man had been created. Of Hume Wesley asked, did he "know the heart of man? No more than a worm or a beetle does."[20] It was just at this point that Wesley diverged from these champions of humanity. They were ignorant of the corrupt nature of the human heart, and being ignorant they were enemies of its transformation, particularly as the road to it is set forth in the Christian revelation. The blindness of these men, however, did not alter Wesley's opinion that ordinary folk could be made to understand their sinfulness and to heed the appeal of the gospel.

The term Wesley uses to cover the knowledge and conviction of one's sinful condition is "repentance." It was said above that, roughly speaking, he used the terms "original sin" and "repentance" interchangeably, and a discussion of the exact relationship between them has thus far been omitted. A more detailed reference to their correspondence is here in order. Repentance is of two kinds or degrees. There is a repentance before one has received the gospel, and there is a repentance afterward persisting in the life of the believer. This latter kind will be mentioned in its proper place later. The first "is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness; and which preceded our

[17] *Ibid.*, V, 352–353.

[18] *Ibid.*, V, 353, note 1, cited by editor.

[19] *Ibid.*, VI, 23, note 1, cited by editor; *Journal*, V, 352, note 2, cited by editor.

[20] *Works*, II, 477.

receiving that kingdom of God, which our Lord observes, is 'within us.'" Without it that kingdom cannot be entered.[21] It is the porch to the Kingdom. "First, 'repent'; that is, know yourselves. This is the first repentance previous to faith; even conviction, or self-knowledge. Awake then, thou that sleepest. Know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature, whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness."[22] Wesley's discourses "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" touch this matter at the very start. It is not merely coincidence that what he conceived to be the porch to salvation and the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount should so well agree. Wesley's observation is "that real Christianity always begins in poverty of spirit. . . . The foundation of all is poverty of spirit: here, therefore, our Lord begins. 'Blessed,' saith he, 'are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'" The poor in spirit are not those who love poverty and are free from the covetousness of riches, but they are, rather, those who through their acquaintance with themselves are convinced of their sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness, and who in deep humility experience sorrow. To repent, then, is to realize your fallen state and to feel the wrath of God abiding on you.[23]

As desirable and necessary as are the conviction of sinfulness and the attitude of penitence, man is unable of himself to experience them without the grace of God. No part of the Christian work of redemption is isolated from the power and influence of God. Every step is due to grace, even the first tendency toward life and salvation. Alone man is unable to discover his condition because of the wickedness and deceitfulness of his heart.[24] Nor can anyone else persuade him to repent.[25] God alone is equal to it. By his preventing grace he gives a man a faint degree of self-knowledge and sensibility toward God. He continues it "by *convincing grace,* usually in Scripture termed *repentance;* which

[21] *Ibid.*, I, 116.
[22] *Ibid.*, I, 64.
[23] *Ibid.*, I, 181–182; also Notes Upon the New Testament, 19.
[24] *Ibid.*, II, 475.
[25] *Ibid.*, II, 421.

brings a larger measure of self knowledge, and a further deliverance from the heart of stone."[26]

True Christian humility, which is self-knowledge, heals the deadly disease of pride.[27] For the conviction of sinfulness and guilt together with the recognition of one's utter inability to help himself or to think or do any good thing apart from the power of God, is hardly compatible with levity of temper or behavior, or with a desire for praise.[28] To put on sackcloth and sit in dust and ashes would express the more fitting attitude.[29] Particular watchfulness against this disease is enjoined; as it was one of the two first evils to cause the downfall of man, so it is one of the last to be rooted out.[30] In this light Wesley's persistent opposition to all adornment of the body with pearls, gold, and fine clothes becomes clear and rational. He objected to extravagance in these things for one reason because every needless expenditure is so much food and clothing taken away from the poor and needy. Its sinfulness lies in that it "is the blood of the poor."[31] But there is another reason why these things are to be condemned. They arouse pride in those who are free from it and feed it in those in whom it already exists. "Experience shows that fine clothes have a natural tendency to make a man sick of pride. . . . Therefore, all that desire to be clothed with humility, abstain from that poison."[32] Not only pride, but also a whole riot of evils follows in its wake. The godly will, therefore, take care to adorn themselves more abundantly with good works.[33]

Wesley for the same reason also often preached daringly against riches. He warned the Methodists who were fast increasing in wealth that Christianity tends to disintegrate by reason of the worldly success that it promotes. The very qualities of sobriety, industry, frugality, lead to outward prosperity and beget riches. "And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity."[34] And they shift confidence and trust from God to themselves.[35]

[26] *Ibid.*, II, 235–236.
[27] *Ibid.*, I, 398; also VI, 770.
[28] *Ibid.*, II, 125; VI, 764, 770.
[29] *Ibid.*, II, 73.
[30] *Ibid.*, II, 291, 473.
[31] *Ibid.*, II, 262; V, 132.
[32] *Ibid.*, II, 260.
[33] *Ibid.*, II, 262.
[34] *Ibid.*, II, 441; see also II, 398–400.
[35] *Ibid.*, II, 397.

The best possible safeguard is a habit he himself long practiced and often recommended. It is epigrammatically summarized in his familiar formula, "Get all you can, save all you can, but give all you can."[36]

II. Justification by Faith and Regeneration

The individual who thus convinced of his original sin passes the porch of repentance is not yet born again and cannot be said to have entered the edifice of religion. He must pass through the door of faith. Although Wesley asserts that repentance is prior to faith, in his writings it is difficult to separate these two sharply and to say which is prior, for they merge into each other almost imperceptibly. He who comes to God in faith must fix his eye on all that is bad in himself and sincerely feel a lack of all that is good.[37] But it must be noted that this is the attitude of mingled faith and penitence. Ultimately the question as to whether faith or repentance is first cannot be settled without determining more closely which kind of faith is meant. For Wesley held to two distinct kinds of faith, or three, if the first is divided into its two degrees. It might be more strictly accurate to say that he held to one genus of faith, of which there are two species. The definition of faith he once called the most comprehensive that ever was or could be given, including every kind from the lowest to the highest, is that found in his sermon on the text, "Without faith, it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11. 6). There he says, "It is a divine 'evidence and conviction of things not seen': of things which are not seen now, whether they are visible or invisible in their own nature. Particularly, it is a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God."[38] The different shades of meaning that Wesley gave to faith are made to harmonize with this definition.

Now, faith is needed because by it alone can the invisible, spiritual world be known. For the senses are helpless and the reason but partially able to comprehend it. Wesley's starting-

[36] *Journal*, VII, 372, note 2, cited by editor.
[37] *Works*, I, 52.
[38] *Ibid.*, II, 383.

point here is an application of Locke's position that the mind has no innate principles.[39] Whatever is presented to the mind and used in thinking must be an idea, and to be without ideas is to lack both sense and reason.[40] Since, however, ideas are not innate but come originally from the senses, if spiritual things are to be discerned there must be senses adapted to them. The natural, external senses, even the most excellent of them, are capable of bringing to the mind data only from the external visible world, and are incapable of discerning the more delicate objects of the invisible, spiritual world. If these are to be seen, it is necessary to have the internal, spiritual senses of the soul opened —the hearing ear, and the seeing eye.[41] The reason is under the same disability and can render neither judgment nor decision in spiritual matters, for it is dependent upon the ideas furnished by the senses for the ground it stands upon and the materials it works with.[42] Just as when the natural sight is lacking neither the ear nor any other sense organ can furnish the reason with ideas which are only visibly received, so if the spiritual senses are lacking or unawakened, the reason has no material with which it can reach spiritual things, for the external senses are unable to supply it with ideas of a spiritual nature.[43] The only way to know the spiritual things of God is to use the faculties supplied by faith which God can open.[44]

By what is here said it is not difficult to understand Wesley's claim that the religion he advocated was agreeable with reason. It was charged in his day that all who would become Methodists must renounce their reason. To this he replied, "It is a fundamental principle with us, that to renounce reason is to renounce religion; that religion and reason go hand in hand; and that all irrational religion is false religion."[45] Particularly did he apply this verdict to Christianity. His tract, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,* published in 1744, deals with two classes of men. It strives to win the sympathy and

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[39] *Ibid.*, VII, 445; V, 12.
[40] *Ibid.*, VII, 177–178.
[41] *Ibid.*, II, 424; V, 12.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Ibid.*, V, 12–13.
[44] *Ibid.*, V, 13.
[45] *Ibid.*, VII, 499.

support of all genuinely religious men to the Methodist movement. But it also tries to commend the Christian system to the Deists who were opposing Wesley and making havoc of the Christian revelation itself as being contrary to reason. Its position is stated in the words, that an unreasonable man "is no more a Christian than he is an angel. So far as he departs from true, genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity."[46] In this tract he also shows his thorough disgust with the treatise by the Rev. William Dodwell, of Welby, *Christianity not Founded on Argument,* pointing to its fallacies, sophistry, and blasphemy in no uncertain terms.[47] Wesley was "utterly ashamed" of Luther's *Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians,* condemning the author severely for decrying reason as hostile to the gospel of Christ. Contrary to this position, Wesley says reason, which is nothing but the power of apprehending, judging, and discoursing, is not to be berated as a whole any more than seeing, hearing, or feeling.[48]

Now, the uses of reason are many. Besides being of great help in matters of the present world, in secular affairs, it is of help in things pertaining to the spiritual world, enabling us to understand the Scriptures and the whole foundation and superstructure of religion. Among these are the nature of repentance, faith, the new birth, and the tempers of holiness. Reason, then, as far as it goes, is not by any means to be despised. "When, therefore, you despise or depreciate reason, you must not imagine you are doing God service; least of all are you promoting the cause of God, when you are endeavoring to exclude reason out of religion. Unless you willfully shut your eyes, you cannot but see of what service it is both in laying the foundation of true religion, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and in raising the superstructure. You see it directs us in every point, both of faith and practice."[49] While it cannot discover any adequate cure for the diseases of the soul, it can give the individual the impression of his desperate condition.[50] But after all due credit

[46] *Ibid.*, V, 11.
[47] *Ibid.*, V, 13.
[48] *Journal*, II, 467.
[49] *Works*, II, 132.
[50] *Ibid.*, II, 68.

is given to reason, it nevertheless needs to be supplemented if true religion is to be experienced. For although the Holy Spirit works through the mind in producing every degree of faith that is wrought in man,[51] reason itself can produce neither faith, nor hope, nor love, nor happiness. It cannot produce the actual experience of the things concerning which it gives information.[52] This is the sphere of faith.

In general, the three kinds of faith differ somewhat in both degree and quality. The lowest faith is a mere recognition of the existence of the invisible world and of the things of God. Such as hold this faith believe in the being and attributes of God and that he created and governs the world. In varying degrees a Deist, a Mohammedan, a Jew, or a heathen may be said to have such a faith.[53] Faith of a higher kind is a speculative assent to that particular truth of God that he gave Christ to save the world, and that Christ does save. This, however, is a dead faith.[54] The kind of faith covered by these two definitions, namely, the faith that is simply an evidence that there is some One to come to in repentance, may be said properly to precede repentance. The third and living faith, faith in the true Christian sense, is that by which comes justification before God. It is a sort of intuition,[55] a disposition of the heart, "a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ, *his* sins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the favor of God; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' or, in one word, our salvation."[56] It is the personal appropriation of Christ as distinguished from the belief in his availability. And it is saving faith, according to Wesley, because the conviction that the love and death of Christ was for me carries the irresistible conviction that I am reconciled with God. The one cannot be without the other. It is only when faith of this sort is held that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer.[57] At the

[51] *Ibid.*, VII, 109.
[52] *Ibid.*, II, 129–132.
[53] *Ibid.*, II, 384.
[54] *Ibid.*, II, 385.
[55] *Ibid.*, II, 72.
[56] *Ibid.*, I, 14–15.
[57] *Ibid.*, I, 169–177.

very time a person believes in the righteousness of Christ it is imputed to him, for "faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable."[58] The first two kinds of faith merely define the field where the remedy for sin is to be found. The third kind is itself the medicine given to men to heal their sickness.[59]

The distinction is more finely brought out in Wesley's use of the terms "faith of a servant" and "faith of a son," a distinction often employed, but elaborated at length in his sermon "On the Discoveries of Faith." After saying that the conviction of an evil nature and of a thoroughly evil life, leading very properly to cringing fear of punishment, "implies a species of faith," he calls his hearers to observe that it is a point of great importance "that this faith is only the faith of a servant, and not the faith of a son."[60] A servant is aware of spiritual things that belong to salvation, but he has not experienced them. His faith does not get beyond the fear of God. On the other hand, he who has the faith of a son has passed from the bondage of fear into the spirit of adoption and has experienced and appropriated salvation through Christ. He has become a child of God.[61] Wesley confesses that when first he and his associates preached the doctrine of salvation by faith they did not enough appreciate the points in common between a servant and a child of God. One who could not say with certainty that his sins were forgiven was set down forthwith as a child of the devil. Years of experience, however, taught him that such servants were acceptable unto God, and he therefore pressed them to strive for and expect sonship. Whereas before by this attitude he was "apt to make sad the hearts of those whom God had not made sad," he now encouraged them to be thankful for what they were already and at the same time to be dissatisfied until they became sons.[62]

On this point Wesley could speak out of the sadness of his own past. Up to the spiritual crisis of conversion in his own life, in May, 1738, he firmly believed that he was not a Christian. On the voyage home from Georgia he put himself through a

[58] *Ibid.*, I, 171.
[59] *Ibid.*, I, 149.
[60] *Ibid.*, II, 409.
[61] *Ibid.*, II, 409–410.
[62] *Ibid.*, II, 385–386.

severe cross-examination. Upon landing in London he set down in his *Journal* his impressions of his spiritual status. "I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."[63] He bluntly admits that he was "a child of wrath."[64] He had faith, but it was of a dreary, uncomforting sort.[65] In after years, when he corrected and re-edited his *Journals,* he made several amendments to these statements. His comment on the record that he was never converted is: "I am not sure of this."[66] To the earlier entry that he was "a child of wrath" he joined "I believe not."[67] He also described his later conception of his earlier faith by saying: "I had even then the faith of a *servant,* though not that of a *son.*"[68] What he yearned for and what his conversion gave him was the faith that justifies. "The faith I want is 'a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God.' . . . I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it."[69] And this according to the revision of the *Journal* is "the faith of a *son.*"[70] This conversion experience altered his whole conception of faith, and from that time on he described it according to its definition of a personal appropriation. The change in his use of the term is concretely illustrated by his sermon on "The Circumcision of the Heart." When in 1733 he preached it in Saint Mary's, before the University of Oxford, he defined faith in the second sense. But when he published it in 1748, ten years after his conversion, he added the third meaning as the true Christian meaning.[71]

There are many statements in Wesley's writings that sum up his position on this subject, but none that connect the points in his system thus far treated in a more illuminating manner than the following section from "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion": "Without faith we cannot be saved, for we cannot rightly serve God unless we love him. And we cannot love him unless we know him; neither can we know him unless by faith.

[63] *Journal,* I, 422.
[64] *Ibid.,* I, 423.
[65] *Ibid.,* I, 424.
[66] *Ibid.,* I, 422, note 2.
[67] *Ibid.,* I, 423, note 2.
[68] *Ibid.,* I, 423, note 1.
[69] *Ibid.,* I, 424.
[70] *Ibid.,* I, 424, note 1.
[71] *Works,* I, 149.

Therefore, salvation by faith is only, in other words, the love of God by the knowledge of God; or the recovery of the image of God, by a true, spiritual acquaintance with him."[72]

At the moment the individual receives justification, or salvation, by faith, he is born again, or regenerated. Neither of these experiences precedes the other in order of time; but in order of thinking justification is first. Justification does not have the same meaning as regeneration, but describes the changed status of the individual in the sight of God, whereas regeneration describes the new life begun in the individual. Justification implies a relative change, relating to the great work God does *for* the individual, in forgiving his sins, delivering him from his guilt, and restoring him to the favor of God as a son. Regeneration, on the other hand, is a real change which God works *in* the individual. It renews his fallen nature into the image of God, changing him from a sinner to a saint and breaking the power of sin.[73] The experience here described as the new birth is ordinarily known as conversion. Wesley sometimes calls the experience by this term. But he was loath to do so, for he found it but rarely used in the New Testament.[74]

In the thought of Wesley the new birth is not merely an outward change that leads to an exact performance of religious and social duties. It is a new disposition, an inward transformation into the mind that was in Christ.[75] The bent of the nature is changed. Inward sinfulness changes to inward holiness, and the diseases of nature are arrested. The love of the world gives place to the love of God, pride changes to humility, self-will merges into the will of God, and sensual tempers become spiritual. The change is as great as that of the body when it is born into the world.[76] Indeed, the analogy between the spiritual birth and the natural birth is very close. Just as the infant in the prenatal state is excluded from the life of the world, so man in the natural state is shut off from contact with the spiritual world. As the bodily senses in the infant are dormant until birth, so the spiritual senses

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[72] *Ibid.*, V, 35.
[73] *Ibid.*, I, 109, 162, 399.
[74] *Ibid.*, V, 368.
[75] *Ibid.*, I, 403–404.
[76] *Ibid.*, II, 389–390.

are asleep in the individual until he is born again of the Spirit. In both instances there is properly no life until the moment of birth.[77]

III. Sanctification

But repentance and justification by faith are merely the first principles of Christianity, says Wesley, borrowing an expression from Paul. They are merely the foundation of piety. They are not religion, but the threshold of it, the preparation for it. More is required of the individual for his eternal salvation than the pardon and rebirth received at justification. He needs sanctification.[78] Quite frequently Wesley uses the terms "piety," "holiness," "real religion," "Christian perfection," and "sanctification" interchangeably, and does not distinguish between them in meaning.

The doctrine of perfection was much misunderstood in Wesley's day, and even afterward. It was objected that he meant by it something different from the teaching of the church as found in her Liturgy. Wesley replied that "it is exactly the same which every clergyman prays for every Sunday: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy name.' "[79] And he made frequent reference to this prayer as the test of his teaching on perfection. As a matter of fact, the cause for objection came from an imaginary ideal which was thought to represent his position.[80] The mistake was somewhat justified, for Wesley used the word rather carelessly and gave it a different connotation from that which it commonly holds as descriptive of a life lived accurately "according to the absolute moral law."[81] He guarded his use of it by calling it *Christian Perfection.* But even so to harmonize his statements about it is an impossibilty.[82] He claimed to have no especial fondness for the term, and that it rarely

[77] *Ibid.*, I, 402–403.
[78] *Ibid.*, V, 201, 264, 275.
[79] *Ibid.*, VI, 196.
[80] *Ibid.*, VI, 504.
[81] Stevens: *A History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, Called Methodism*, II, 412. See also Works, I, 355–358; II, 168; VI, 127, 501, 531–532.
[82] Curtis: *The Christian Faith*, 378.

occurred in his preaching or writing except when he was driven to use it in controversy.[83] He preferred the words "holiness" and "sanctification."

Many have been kept from desiring entire sanctification and from striving for it by the mischievous opinion that when one is justified he is wholly sanctified. On the contrary, the process of transformation is but begun. The diseases of his nature are not wholly cured, the power of sin is not entirely broken, the corrupt nature has not been completely supplanted. To think otherwise is to destroy the desire for further healing and growth.[84] What growth is to birth, sanctification is to justification. But although sanctification is a more advanced stage in the Christian life than justification, it is not totally different from it in nature. The characteristic mark of all stages of the Christian life is holiness. And there is but one kind of holiness, and that is love having unhindered and uninterrupted rule of the individual. The difference between holiness in justification and in sanctification lies only in the difference in the degree of love. This love branches out in two directions, toward God and toward all mankind for God's sake.[85] The one is inward righteousness, the other outward. The first expresses itself through "works of piety," the second through "works of mercy." The life which possesses true religion will, through the sheer love of God and the pious disposition of the heart, naturally and spontaneously love whenever possible to worship him in public and in private, to consult his Word, and to commune with him through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Such a life will also through a love for all mankind engage in works of mercy as naturally as in works of piety. It will, indeed, be more zealous for these than for acts of devotion.[86]

[83] *Works*, VI, 534.

[84] *Ibid.*, I, 124–125.

[85] Wesley: *Instructions for Children*, 126. From Vol. XXIV of *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, Bristol, 1771–1774, 32 Vols. In this edition of Wesley's works it is entitled *Instructions for Christians*, the caption given to it when it was republished. See Green: *The Works of John and Charles Wesley. A Bibliography*. No. 174. In this dissertation this work is referred to by its first name.

[86] *Works*, II, 293.

For Wesley the ethical nature of the pious life was the chief interest.[87] Probably no man in England in the eighteenth century insisted more upon good works than Wesley. And many thought that he was contradicting his position of justification by faith alone. His answer to one such charge was: "I do as strongly insist on them as on faith. But each in its own order."[88] That order is faith and then works. No merit or claim of works is necessary in order to receive justification from God.[89] As a matter of fact, no work that the individual can do before his justification can possibly be good, but has the nature of evil, because of his corruption and depravity which causes him to sin at every breath. It is only ignorance of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer through the covenant of grace that makes him trust stupidly in the ability of his own outward righteousness to purchase his redemption.[90] Wesley learned for himself through twenty years' use of good works as commutations the futility of such a trust.[91] And yet although present salvation is not conditioned by such works, future salvation is, as well as continuance in the state of justification.[92] Good works are the fruit of faith. Man is therefore justified by faith that is alone, and yet is not alone.[93] Solitary religion is not to be found in the gospel of Christ. It "knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. 'Faith working by love' is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection."[94]

When holiness is thus defined as love to God and man, there is no difficulty in seeing that there can be differences in the degree with which it reigns in people, or in the same individual at different times. Wesley held that "perfection of kinds and perfection of degrees" is a proper distinction.[95] "This I term sanctification (which is both an instantaneous and a gradual work), or perfection, the being perfected in love, filled with love, which still

[87] McGiffert: *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, 167. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[88] *Works*, V, 287.
[89] *Ibid.*, V, 7.
[90] *Ibid.*, I, 58; V, 275.
[91] *Ibid.*, VI, 628.
[92] *Ibid.*, V, 275, 301.
[93] *Ibid.*, V, 440; VI, 716.
[94] *Ibid.*, VII, 593.
[95] *Ibid.*, VI, 535.

admits of a thousand degrees."[96] His meaning is brought out in his use of the distinction found in 1 John 5. 18 between little children in Christ, young men, and fathers.[97] Beginners in the Christian life are, in Paul's expression, "babes in Christ."[98] The young men are more mature Christians. The fathers are fully grown up.[99] The holiness of a beginner in the Christian way is mixed with contrary tempers and his faith is weak. Considerable of the natural man still remains in him. But as he matures into young manhood he grows in grace and increases in holiness. His life becomes more consistent and harmonious. In him there is less of evil mixed with good than formerly. When the change is complete he has become a father in Christ. He is now not in the least a "divided self." Nor has he any doubt of the accomplishment of the change in his nature. Love has now complete rule of his life, of his whole soul and mind and strength.[100] Yet through all this gradual change from the beginner on to the father in Christ it is possible for the individual to avoid committing sin, and by the time he reaches maturity of Christian experience it is possible for him to avoid even evil thoughts and tempers.[101] To make clear his meaning that perfection is a growing experience in holiness, both gradual and instantaneous, of the same nature throughout but found in different degrees, Wesley employs the analogy of death. The body does not actually die until the soul separates from it, although it may be wasting away from illness over a considerable stretch of time. So the regenerate man may not be really dead to sin and alive to righteousness until a particular moment, although he may be dying to sin and growing in grace over a period of time. In fact, spiritual growth is to be expected not only as long as there is life, but even throughout eternity.[102] "Entire holiness does not exclude growth."[103]

Much of the perplexity aroused by this doctrine of holiness, or perfection, vanishes if it be remembered that what Wesley stresses is not the perfection of human nature but the control of it.

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[96] *Ibid.*, VII, 71.
[97] *Ibid.*, II, 221–222; Journal, II, 355.
[98] *Ibid.*, II, 184.
[99] *Ibid.*, I, 358; II, 221–222, 410.
[100] *Ibid.*, II, 221–222.
[101] *Ibid.*, I, 358–359, 365.
[102] *Ibid.*, VI, 505.
[103] *Ibid.*, V, 573.

"Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations."[104] In spite of all that the individual can do his nature will remain evil, and his heart still have a tendency to sin. The diseases of nature, self-will, pride, and idolatry will not be supplanted.[105] But to have sin does not mean that the individual must commit sin.[106] He can keep this sinful nature down and conquer it so far that it does not prevail. As long as this is done, the individual may be said to experience holiness and perfection.[107] But that he has the experience is not a guarantee that he will retain it.

In order to the continued experience of holiness it is necessary for the individual to "keep himself." Wesley here uses the conception in 1 John 5. 18, that only those who keep themselves do not commit sin.[108] That is to say, they must be constantly on guard against sin and practice the power of Christ.[109] Two of Wesley's sermons, "Sin in Believers" and "The Repentance of Believers," illuminate this point. Their very titles are suggestive. The teaching of the first sermon is that although the Christian is a new creature at his regeneration, yet in him there exist to the end of his life two contrary principles at enmity with each other, the flesh and the spirit, nature and grace, making necessary an unremitted warfare.[110] The companion sermon follows this teaching with the logical application that repeated repentance and faith are therefore necessary. These "are full as necessary, in order to our *continuance* and *growth* in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our *entering* into the kingdom of God." By this second repentance the believer comes to feel the conviction that there is sin and guilt still remaining within him. But by his faith power is received through Christ to overcome and to advance in perfection.[111] For the more the Christian grows in grace, the greater is his insight into the meaning of sin and the desperateness of his condition without the power and

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[104] *Ibid.*, I, 358.
[105] *Ibid.*, II, 476.
[106] *Ibid.*, VI, 625.
[107] *Ibid.*, I, 355–368; II, 476.
[108] *Ibid.*, I, 359; V, 18; VI, 536.
[109] *Ibid.*, V, 18.
[110] *Ibid.*, I, 108ff.
[111] *Ibid.*, I, 124.

righteousness of Christ, and the more conscious is he of his need of justification through Christ. His condition is such that even after his regeneration he never gets beyond the need of the constant atonement of Christ.[112] And his growth, just as his rebirth, is marked by repeated cycles of repentance and faith.

From this it is seen that Wesley held a lofty conception of holiness. So high was it, indeed, that he hesitated in believing he possessed it. As far as the records show, he never professed to have attained it. In 1767 he wrote a letter to Lloyd's Evening Post defending the doctrine of perfection against current misrepresentations. The charge was made that "a Methodist, according to Mr. Wesley, is one who is perfect, and sinneth not in thought, word, or deed." To this Wesley replied: "Sir, have me excused. This is not 'according to Mr. Wesley.' I have told all the world I am not perfect; and yet you allow me to be a Methodist. I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw. Will you pin it upon me in spite of my teeth? 'But Mr. Wesley says the other Methodists have.' I say no such thing. What I say, after having given a scriptural account of a perfect Christian, is this: 'By these marks the Methodists *desire* to be distinguished from other men; by these we *labor* to distinguish ourselves.' "[113]

He was also slow to believe that others had attained it. Toward the end of the year 1744 he came into touch with two people who claimed they were saved from all sin. He speaks of it in his *Journal* and asks himself why it is he cannot rejoice with an individual who claims this experience. His answer is that it is "perhaps because I have an exceeding complex idea of sanctification or a sanctified man. And so, for fear he should not have attained all that I include in that idea, I cannot rejoice in what he has attained."[114]

Such is the doctrine of sanctification or perfection, according to Wesley. When it is stripped of its qualifying points, it describes the condition of a life that is being lived honestly up

[112] *Ibid.*, II, 476; VI, 501.
[113] *Journal*, V, 197.
[114] *Ibid.*, III, 154.

to the highest light that is progressively revealed to it. Whether that life is marked by sharp crises or by a gradual development, it clings to the ideal of progress in character as an essential Christian duty.[115]

IV. Assurance, or the Witness of the Spirit

The doctrine of assurance, or witness of the Spirit, is the corollary of the doctrine of justification and sanctification. It means that progress in the Christian life has its witness in the realm of feeling. It is "Wesley's appeal to experience."[116] The definition that he held to throughout the years, without retracting any part of it, is the one given in his second discourse on "The Witness of the Spirit." It is as follows: "By the testimony of the Spirit I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God, immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."[117] Early in life he saw the necessity to the health of the soul of being certain of one's spiritual condition. He had been reading Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying,* and wrote to his mother his objection to the idea that "whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not." He ventures the contrary belief that Christian graces and a living relation to Christ cannot be of such little force that he who has them cannot tell whether he has them or not.[118] And to the end of his life he held to this opinion. To say otherwise would be to reduce the Christian life to an absurdity. It would also make God out to be mean and unmerciful if he did not give to a poor, wretched sinner worrying about his condition the knowledge that he had pardoned him. His mercy obliges him to witness to his children his pardon and reconciliation.[119] To have a consciousness of this is the common privilege of all Christians.[120] Indeed, one cannot be a true Christian without it. "We believe it cannot be, in the

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[115] McConnell: *Essentials of Methodism*, 22.
[116] *A New History of Methodism*, I, 19.
[117] *Works*, I, 94.
[118] *Ibid.*, VI, 589.
[119] *Ibid.*, VII, 107.
[120] *Ibid.*, VII, 495

nature of things, that a man should be filled with this peace, and joy, and love, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without perceiving it as clearly as he does the light of the sun."[121] But this assurance covers only present pardon and salvation.[122] It is "not necessarily perpetual, neither irreversible."[123] It is given to but few to know of their everlasting perseverance.[124] To be sure, he who has the witness of the Spirit does not have any doubt that he will be able to remain steadfast to the end. Yet, properly speaking, it is assurance only of the present that is ordinarily experienced.[125]

V. The Means of Grace

Every step in the progress toward perfection depends upon the grace of God. But the reception of grace depends at every point upon the individual himself, upon the use of the means of grace which God has instituted for its transmission. It is true that God can influence a life directly; but it is his way generally to work through subordinate agencies.[126] To expect the work of God to be accomplished without the use of the available means is one variety of enthusiasm.[127] The word "enthusiasm" was a well-known epithet in the eighteenth century, which, according to Wesley, signified "a sort of religious madness; a *false imagination* of being inspired by God."[128] When, therefore, he told his hearers that to expect the end without the means is to be an enthusiast, they knew he was classing them among the religiously mad. The means are to be zealously used. For their sake primarily was the church founded. Zeal for the church, therefore, is but an empty name where there is no zeal for them.[129] One ought, if anything, to be more zealous for them than for the church itself.[130] Another abuse of the means of grace is to mistake them for the end of religion. They are not a substitute for heart religion, but the means for attaining it and promoting it. Unless they "actually conduce to the knowl-

[121] *Ibid.*, VI, 631.
[122] *Ibid.*, V, 369.
[123] *Ibid.*, VI, 607.
[124] *Ibid.*, VII, 495.
[125] *Ibid.*, I, 485.
[126] *Ibid.*, I, 335; II, 471.
[127] *Ibid.*, I, 335; VI, 521.
[128] *Ibid.*, V, 76.
[129] *Ibid.*, II, 293.
[130] *Ibid.*, II, 290.

edge and love of God, they are not acceptable in his sight."[131] The Christian will be careful, then, "neither to neglect nor rest in the means of grace."[132]

Wesley's *Journal* and sermons constantly bewail the current neglect of the means of grace and the ordinances of the church and point out their great importance. It is not necessary to search far for the reason. Religious matters were woefully neglected in the eighteenth century. The clergy for the most part were illiterate (and immoral)[133] and lazy and did little else in a clerical way in their parishes save to read the services and preach on Sundays.[134] Many of them lived in different towns from their parishes and many had more than one parish. It was not to be expected, under these circumstances, that they should devote much time to their work.[135] As the century advanced, daily church services were less frequently attended and were finally discontinued in almost all parts of the kingdom.[136] The special Wednesday and Friday services suffered a similar neglect and were finally abandoned.[137] There was also similar disregard of other special days.[138] Lent was superficially observed.[139] The general apathy will be better realized when it is remembered that attendance upon public worship was required by law. But this made no difference, as generally not much notice was taken of either statute law or canon law.[140] Where attendance did keep up, conduct was commonly irreverent.[141] The institutions of the church were slighted. The number of communicants at the Lord's Table gradually diminished throughout the century, and

[131] *Ibid.*, I, 137.

[132] *Journal*, II, 320.

[133] *A New History of Methodism*, I, 117–118; see also Simon: *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, 115–117.

[134] Abbey and Overton: *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, II, 48, 51; also Sydney: *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century*, II, 338, 346–351.

[135] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, II, 10–17; Sydney, *op. cit.*, II, 331–338, 340–342.

[136] *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, II, 445.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 446.

[138] *Ibid.*, 446ff.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 448.

[140] Simon: *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, 234.

[141] Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, II, 459–463; Sydney, *op. cit.*, II, 362.

often in many places months separated the celebration of this rite.[142] Rarely was the rite of baptism performed at the hour of public worship; it was performed, if at all, in private, and then with shocking irreverence.[143] Confirmations were infrequent, and when performed were hurried and void of solemnity.[144] The old custom of the public catechizing of children, servants, and apprentices had been an important means of religious instruction; but this too was now but infrequently used.[145] Such was the deplorable neglect of the institutions of the church in the eighteenth century. Many of the leaders of the church were aware of the state of things and of their responsibility. But their protests were of little avail.[146] Wesley, too, labored to put an end to the neglect, and with a measure of success.

A paragraph in his sermon on "The Means of Grace" gives his definition of the means of grace and of their office. "By means of grace I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying or sanctifying grace." They are sacraments. "A sacrament is 'an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.' "[147] Prayer, public and private, searching the Scriptures, receiving the Lord's Supper, fasting, and Christian conference, are the chief means ordained of God. These are what Wesley calls "instituted means."[148] As distinguished from the instituted means are the "prudential," those "not essential, not of divine institution." They concern rules and devices for embracing, or abstaining from, things indifferent in themselves, but which experience teaches are for particular individuals harm-

[142] Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, II, 477–478.

[143] *Ibid.*, II, 498–499.

[144] *Ibid.*, II, 502–503; Sydney, *op. cit.*, II, 339.

[145] *Ibid.*, II, 500–502; Sydney, *op. cit.*, II, 339.

[146] Sydney, *op. cit.*, II, 56, 379.

[147] *Works*, I, 137.

[148] *Minutes* of the Methodist Conferences, from the First, Held in London, by the late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., in the year 1744, I, 16–17. Also *Works*, V, 228–229. The "Minutes" gives an ampler account of the Conferences than is contained in the *Works*, and is therefore cited first. Several important matters contained in it are omitted entirely from the *Works*.

ful or helpful in the art of holy living and growing in grace, in doing good and avoiding evil.[149]

In the list of instituted means as stated above the rite of baptism does not appear. Nor is it mentioned in Wesley's frequent lists of the ordinances. It is evident that he was not particularly endeared to it, as he was, for instance, to the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, he considered it a sacrament and a means of grace.[150] It is the initiatory sign and the actual inception of the grace of the new birth for both adults and infants. It is "the outward sign of this inward grace." His collected views on it are found in brief form in *A Treatise on Baptism*.[151] It is devoted for the most part to a description and defense of infant baptism.[152] Reference will be made to this phase of it later. The treatise mentions many benefits of baptism. It washes away the guilt of original sin. It admits the individual into covenant relation with God and into the church as a member of Christ. And there is no other way of entering the church. It makes the individual a child of God and an heir of the kingdom of heaven. The manner in which the rite is administered is not important, whether by dipping, washing, or sprinkling, the Scriptures not determining either by precept or example which is to be preferred.[153]

Perhaps the reason for Wesley's lukewarm attitude to baptism is to be found in the abuses to which its administration was leading in his day. Many were shunning the experience of the new birth on the plea that they received it at baptism, and that to seek it again would be denying their baptism.[154] Their lives

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[149] *Ibid.*, I, 17–18; Works, V, 180, 228.

[150] *Journal*, III, 171.

[151] Tyerman: *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.*, 239, calls attention to the fact that this Treatise is in "*slightly* abridged and verbally altered" form a work by the father of John Wesley, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, called a *Short Discourse of Baptism*, and first published in 1700. "He thus makes all the opinions of his father, on baptism, his own; but it is somewhat strange that he should republish the treatise without the least reference to its original author. It is hardly fair that the treatise should be published as his own."

[152] *Works*, VI, 12–22.

[153] *Ibid.*, VI, 12–22.

[154] *Ibid.*, I, 406–407.

were showing that they were far from regenerate and Christian. Naturally, Wesley did not believe in this sort of baptismal regeneration! "But how extremely idle are the common disputes on this head! I tell a sinner, 'You must be born again.' 'No,' say you: 'he was born again in baptism. Therefore he cannot be born again now.' Alas, what trifling is this! What, if he was *then* a child of God? He is *now* manifestly a child of the devil; for the works of his father he doeth. Therefore do not play on words. He must go through an entire change of heart. In one not yet baptized, you yourself would call that change the new birth. In him call it what you will; but remember meantime, that if either he or you die without it, your baptism will be so far from profiting you, that it will greatly increase your damnation."[155] He called attention to the numerous baptized drunkards, thieves, and swearers, and all sorts of evil men. "Are these now the children of God?"[156] England is called a Christian country because the majority of its people have been baptized or christened. But this cannot be, for they live in open sin, whatever they once were.[157] Only on condition that adult folk repent and accept the gospel can it be said of them that they experienced the new birth at baptism.[158] The words of the service that the believer repeats, stating his entrance into the privileges of baptism and his thanks therefor, and his prayer to continue therein, are rank hypocrisy unless he knows them to be true in his particular case.[159] Under any circumstances, if a person baptized in infancy, or even in riper years, has lapsed from the faith, justification cannot be regained without repentance, faith, and their attendant fruits in holy living.[160]

As hostile as Wesley was to the idea that baptism can be made a substitute for inward holiness, it must not be supposed that he neglected the rite or that he believed it unnecessary. On the contrary, he believed that if the outward sign were properly received, the inward grace would always accompany it,[161] that

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[155] *Ibid.*, V, 36.
[156] *Ibid.*, I, 160.
[157] *Ibid.*, V, 332.
[158] *Ibid.*, V, 36.
[159] *Ibid.*, V, 53–54.
[160] *Ibid.*, V, 37.
[161] *Journal*, IV, 365.

God would bear witness to his ordinance with his healing power,[162] and fill the heart of the baptized "at the very time, with peace and joy unspeakable."[163] He was therefore always careful to administer the sacrament on proper occasions, as his *Journal* amply shows. It is interesting to see the delight he took in recording the baptism of persons not usually expected to desire it, such as a Portuguese Jew, Quakers, and Anabaptists.[164] The conclusion of the whole matter is, according to Wesley, that "baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto,"[165] that although the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are applied through this sacrament, there is no salvation in it *per se,* for baptism is not, according to the doctrines of the church, of miraculous worth for adults. The important thing the individual must make sure of is that he is born again.[166]

The order in which the instituted means of grace are laid down by Conference is prayer, searching the Scriptures, and the Lord's Supper.[167] Prayer is the first means in importance for all who desire the grace of God,[168] and no other ordinance can take its place as a means of continuing and increasing the work of God in the soul.[169] To neglect it is, therefore, to hinder the progress of holiness.[170] It is through this means, as well as through love and praise, that the individual "by a kind of spiritual reaction returns the grace he receives."[171] "For it plainly appears, God does not continue to act upon the soul, unless the soul reacts upon God."[172] The individual must pay attention to all three forms of prayer—private, family, and public. He must be jealous for his morning and evening hours of private worship, and "forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours."[173] In Wesley's collected works there are three sets of prayers—one for private use, one for families, and one for chil-

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[162] *Ibid.*, IV, 286.
[163] *Ibid.*, VII, 132.
[164] *Ibid.*, II, 135, 180–181; IV, 39, 189, 245; VII, 132.
[165] *Works*, VI, 15.
[166] *Ibid.*, I, 404–407.
[167] *Ibid.*, V, 228.
[168] *Ibid.*, I, 139.
[169] *Ibid.*, I, 410.
[170] *Ibid.*, I, 284.
[171] *Ibid.*, I, 164.
[172] *Ibid.*, I, 168.
[173] *Ibid.*, V, 228.

dren. The prayers for children will be mentioned later. The private prayers are printed under the topic, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week,* first printed in 1733 for the use of his pupils in Oxford.[174] The suppliant is given a set of general questions for self-examination before beginning his morning devotions and another set for the evening devotions. In addition, each evening prayer has prefixed a set of particular questions to be used in the same way. These questions relate more directly than the general questions to the topic of the prayer to which they are attached—the love of neighbor, humility, mortification, resignation and meekness, and thankfulness. Due place is given in these forms to the inculcation of filial piety, to thankfulness and appreciation for being "born in the church and of religious parents," and to an interest in the schools and universities. That Wesley was a tutor at Lincoln College at the time he published them, and interested in the children in and about Oxford, is reflected in the petitions for blessings on the "nurseries of true religion and useful learning."[175]

Wesley considered family prayer, as well as private, to be a means of grace, and he provided a set of prayers for every day in the week for the use of families. These, in contrast to the private prayers, are addressed to God in the plural person, and voice the more inclusive needs of the family. While they are full of the recognition of the sinfulness and frailty of human nature, they are strong in their appreciation of the redemptive work of Christ. They are marked by a patriotic and altruistic note that reaches in its sympathy all classes and conditions of men, even "Jews, Turks, and infidels."[176] Wesley taught that no day should pass without the serious and solemn performance of family prayer.[177] Yet he was careful to point out that Christianity is of the heart, and that family prayer which is merely an external act cannot be a substitute for genuine piety.[178] It should be literally true to the definition of a means of grace—the outward sign of an inward experience.

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[174] *Journal,* V, 117.
[175] *Works,* VI, 377–401.
[176] *Ibid.,* VI, 401–417.
[177] *Ibid.,* II, 304.
[178] *Ibid.,* V, 129.

Wesley considered attendance upon public prayer to be even more important than private and family prayer, if the insistence with which he mentions it is proper basis for judgment. It is well known that he held high views of the church universal and of the Church of England in particular. Despite the fact that the Methodist movement finally broke away from the Church of England, Wesley held a warm place in his heart for it to the end of his life. He attended its services whenever he could conveniently, and advised his preachers to do the same unless they had contrary scruples.[179] He would not permit the Methodist societies to hold services at the same hour as the Established Churches except where these churches were inaccessible to the people by reason of their distance or size, or when it was undesirable that they should attend them because of pernicious doctrines taught.[180] Whether or not he entertained any premonition of the ultimate separation of the Methodists from the Church of England, he did not permit it to alter his attachment to the church.[181] He advised all those in his societies who were also members of the Church of England to attend the parish services in addition to the society meetings. He even advised Dissenters to frequent their own meetinghouses, cautioning them particularly against wandering about sermon-tasting.[182] His timely "Word to a Sabbath Breaker" contains the advice, "Let not a little thing keep you from the house of God, either in the forenoon or in the afternoon. And spend as much time as you can the rest of the day, either in repeating what you have heard, or in reading the Scripture, or in private prayer, or talking of the things of God."[183]

Wesley looked upon the widespread and constant contempt of the public and private worship of God as one evidence of the ungodliness of the nation.[184] Through his labors to gather in

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[179] *Ibid.*, VII, 298.
[180] *Ibid.*, VII, 315.
[181] Compare Simon: *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, 329–330.
[182] *Works*, VI, 164.
[183] *Ibid.*, VI, 354.
[184] *Ibid.*, VI, 350.

the unchurched multitudes he could report to the Bishop of London a great increase in attendance throughout the country. But he was not deceived into believing that by mere church-going would the real ends of worship be attained.[185] This could be only through such services as would "inform the mind and increase devotion."[186] Were this wanting, God would not be honored nor souls saved. He had to confess that in his own case, despite attendance at church for years, he "had no more of the love of God than a stone."[187] The love of God and neighbor marks the true Christian, and lacking this one cannot be a Christian, no matter how constantly he has attended the public offices of the church even from infancy.[188] Public prayer, as well as private and family prayer, to be a means of grace must lead to inward increase in piety.

The second means of grace is the searching of the Scriptures. In his insistence upon the use of the Bible Wesley was rediscovering for the English people one of the lost emphases of the Reformation. His own devotion to the Bible needs no further comment than his wish expressed in the Preface to the first volume of his sermons, "let me be *homo unius libri*"—a man of one book.[189] It was but natural that he should wish the guide of his life to become the property of all others. Accordingly, he advised his followers to search the Scriptures, by reading them constantly, regularly, carefully, seriously, and fruitfully every day, by meditating upon them at set times and by rules, and by hearing them prayerfully at the morning services of the societies.[190] To help them in this orderly use of the Scriptures he wrote a commentary on both the Old and New Testaments, which he issued under the titles, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* and *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*.[191] The stress he laid upon the use of the Bible was in keeping with his conviction that the Christian life does not usually begin or continue without knowledge that, in the words

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[185] *Ibid.*, V, 344.
[186] *Ibid.*, V, 807.
[187] *Ibid.*, V, 45.
[188] *Ibid.*, V, 49.
[189] *Ibid.*, I, 6.
[190] *Ibid.*, V, 228; I, 141.
[191] *Ibid.*, VII, 534ff., 542ff.

of Paul, "faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."[192] This is the chief and ordinary means by which God saves sinners.[193] To expect spiritual knowledge without reading the Bible is to make oneself an easy victim for enthusiasm.[194] Furthermore, only by keeping close to it would the Methodists avoid personal vagaries and eccentricities, and so he frequently advised them not to depart from it. In the dictionary he wrote he gave as his definition of a Methodist, "one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."[195]

The third of the instituted means of grace is the Lord's Supper. Those who are in any way Christians, even of the lowest standing, are to partake of this sacrament as often as they can. Yet it was not to be restricted to those already believers. Against the common opinion of the day that it was not a converting ordinance, Wesley taught that it was a means whereby preventing grace as well as justifying and sanctifying grace is conveyed. Those who are seeking the help of God, burdened with the conviction of their own helplessness, may and ought to commune. No other condition is indispensably required, "every one who knows he is fit for hell being just fit to come to Christ in this as well as all other ways of His appointment."[196] By it comes the forgiveness of sins and the building up of the soul.[197] Yet by making it accessible to those not yet regenerated does not mean that he encouraged rushing into it unprepared, that is, without solemn prayer and self-examination and devotion.[198] All that he meant was that no negative consideration, such as lack of character or baptism according to any narrow conception, should be made to stand in the way. Looking back to the time when in Georgia he refused to admit a Moravian minister to the Lord's Table because he had not been baptized by an episcopally ordained minister, he exclaimed, as

[192] Romans 10. 17.
[193] *Works*, I, 462.
[194] *Ibid.*, VI, 521.
[195] *Ibid.*, VII, 534, note, cited by editor.
[196] *Journal*, II, 361–362.
[197] *Works*, II, 350.
[198] *Minutes*, I, 17; see also for shorter statement, *Works*, V, 228.

though he had forgotten and was surprised that he ever did it, "can anyone carry High Church zeal higher than this?"[199]

Although the Conference of 1744 declared fasting and Christian conference instituted means of grace, they do not appear as such in Wesley's sermon on "The Means of Grace." There is not the least doubt, however, that he considered them extremely important and a means whereby the grace of God is mediated, whether he considered them in the technical sense as means of grace or not. He particularly enjoined fasting on Friday.[200] But besides this he recommended moderation in eating at all times. Not to do so is to disclose a temper of mind "soft and unnerved."[201] "We abstain from food with this view, that, by the grace of God conveyed into our souls through this outward means, in conjunction with all the other channels of his grace which he hath appointed, we may be enabled to abstain from every passion and temper which is not pleasing in his sight."[202] Just as it is natural for those who are preoccupied for various reasons to neglect to care for their bodies, so it is natural for those who are sincerely overwhelmed by a proper sense of their sinfulness to abstain from food until they have found salvation. Furthermore, not only will those who desire deliverance from the guilt of sin practice abstinence, but also those who desire to be kept from sinning. For indulgence to excess in eating cloys the soul as well as the body and makes the soul the easy prey of the body, sensualizing it and stupefying its noblest faculties. And finally it hinders prayer, inasmuch as it deadens the sensibility toward God and deepens the love of the world.[203] As strongly as Wesley felt about fasting, he was not unreasonable in his recommendation of it for others. The peculiar physical condition of each individual is to be the guide to the extent to which it is carried.[204] It is to be proportioned according to the individual's strength so as to reserve his physical powers and not unfit him for his labors.[205] "Deal faithfully

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[199] *Journal*, III, 434.
[200] *Minutes*, I, 17, 80; *Works*, V, 229.
[201] *Ibid.*, I, 80.
[202] *Works*, I, 252.
[203] *Ibid.*, I, 247–249.
[204] *Ibid.*, I, 231.
[205] *Ibid.*, I, 254.

with thy own soul, and fast as often as thy strength will permit."[206] It was all in the interest of the religious life that he recommended it. He was convinced by a lifelong practice of it that it was helpful, and he wished to share his discovery.

The last of the instituted means of grace is Christian conference. By this Wesley means the control of one's conversation so that what is said not only does not harm anyone, but also helps him on in the Christian life. The best way to meet this result is to determine beforehand the reason for conference and to pray before it and after.[207]

Such was Wesley's teaching on the place and use of the means of grace. The subject ought not, however, to be left without stressing the point, already touched upon, that he did not consider the means of grace limited only to the saved, but open to those seeking salvation.[208] How important a matter this was in his opinion is seen by the attitude he took to the miserable doctrine of "stillness" held by the Moravians. They maintained that no one ought to use any of the means of grace or ordinances of the church unless and until he had true faith and a clean heart, that he ought to be "still" and wait until he possessed them. They further held that even for these people it was a matter of individual conscience whether or not they used them. Some even believed that Christ alone and not the ordinances is the means of grace.[209] Such quibbling Wesley considered the worst enemy of true holiness. To the end of his life he preached justification by faith without the merit of works. But at the same time he preached that the ordinances of the church were not properly speaking "works," but merely channels through which divine help is generally imparted to the subject who uses them, and that therefore they should be used both before and after justification.

The dispute ultimately caused both John and Charles Wesley to withdraw from the Fetter Lane Society, the stronghold

[206] *Ibid.*, I, 231.

[207] *Minutes*, I, 17; *Works*, V, 229.

[208] *Journal*, II, 330.

[209] *Ibid.*, II, 313, 315. For Wesley's exact relationship with the Moravians on this point, see *Journal*, II, 309–500.

of the Moravians, and nearly rent asunder the distinctively Methodist societies in London and other parts of England. Here was a matter, if ever there was one, making a teaching ministry absolutely necessary and without delay. The early morning meetings at the Foundery and elsewhere Wesley considered of great importance as a means of instructing the societies and promoting their spiritual life. He usually made his expository addresses at that hour fit some topic pertinent at the time. During the agitation over "stillness" his scriptural expositions were designed "to strike at the root of the grand delusion."[210] The *Journal* covering the period gives the notes of his expositions. Mr. Curnock says, "The method adopted is the one he learned and himself used in the schools at Oxford. He is still the 'tutor,' the University 'lecturer.'"[211] By his talks he brought peace back again to the society and halted the inroads of the Moravians. It was undoubtedly due in no small measure to Wesley and his preachers that not only the number of communicants increased throughout England,[212] but that the other means of grace and ordinances of the church were lifted out of contempt and neglect,[213] just as they were in the places where he combated this doctrine of the Moravians.

VI. The Relation Between Wesley's Doctrines and Methodist Polity

There is a vital relationship between the Methodist doctrine of growth in grace unto perfection and the form and government of the United Societies of Methodism. The one purpose that rules their origin and continuation is the supervised training of Christians in holiness. Wesley began his evangelical mission in the Religious Societies and worked through them for several years. They were gatherings of religious folk within the Church of England. Giving a broad and practical meaning to holiness, they aimed to develop the spiritual life of their mem-

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[210] *Ibid.*, II, 354.
[211] *Ibid.*, II, 354, note 1, editorial note.
[212] Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, II, 479.
[213] *Works*, V, 291.

bers, to assist the poor, and to spread Christian knowledge.[214] As time went on, Wesley became convinced that they were not performing the service for which they had been founded, and also that the time was ripe for societies open to everybody regardless of their church relationship.[215] He therefore created new societies, which later came to be known as the United Societies, carrying over into them the best traditions of the Religious Societies. He states the ideal that inspired him in his description of "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies": "Such a society is no other than 'a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.'"[216]

The consideration that contributed most to the form that these societies took was Wesley's wish that progress in the Christian life should be continuous and under constant watch. By the very nature of the "itineracy" there was a danger that the efforts of the preachers would be discursive. As a general rule, Wesley would not begin a work in any place which he could not be sure of following and developing.[217] "He had slight faith in the effectiveness of a fugitive ministry."[218] He set his face positively against such a conception of the work of a minister as would invite a sinner to come to Christ and then leave him after his conversion to shift for himself without guidance and oversight. Quick methods of evangelism resulting in mere numbers recorded on the official books did not answer to Wesley's ideal of the church. After the sinner is converted he must be led on to grow in holiness. The societies accordingly became schools of holiness with provision for instruction in righteousness suited to the needs and capacities of those in different stages of spiritual progress.

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[214] Simon: *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, 20.
[215] *Ibid.*, 306–307.
[216] *Works*, V, 190.
[217] *Ibid.*, V, 212.
[218] Simon: *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, 167.

The members of the societies were divided into groups called "The Bands," "The Select Societies," and "The Penitents." The only condition of admission into the general organization was "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins."[219] Such of those received into membership as believed they were justified by faith were enrolled into smaller companies, called "The Bands," of not less than five and not more than ten members, "the married or single men, and married or single women, together."[220] Those in the Bands who "went on daily from faith to faith" were separated from those who "fell from the faith." In some places the former group composed separate companies called "The Select Societies."[221] Those in the latter group were called "The Penitents."[222] Each of these groups, except the Penitents, was governed by special rules dealing with conditions of admission, attendance upon the meetings, and continuance as members. Distinct from these there was another division of the local societies into classes, each composed of about twelve members, meeting once a week, under the supervision of a leader, for mutual edification through personal testimony and fellowship in prayer and praise. The knowledge gained by the leader of his members through these class-meetings and through private conferences was handed on to the traveling preacher at his regular visits, who used it as the basis of systematic supervision.[223] By this system the spiritual ardor of the Methodists was sustained and their development in holiness made more secure than could have been possible by public worship alone. Wesley recognized it to be the very heart of the societies. In a pastoral letter to the societies in Bristol, written late in 1763 or early in 1764, he characteristically urges the duty of meeting regularly in band and class, declaring, "Whoever misses his class thrice together thereby excludes himself."[224]

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[219] *Works*, V, 177.

[220] *Ibid.*, V, 183.

[221] *Ibid.*, V, 184–185; Simon: *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, 214.

[222] *Ibid.*, V, 184–185.

[223] *Ibid.*, V, 178–179, 190–191; *A New History of Methodism*, I, 287–289.

[224] *Journal*, V, 31, note 2, cited by editor.

Wesley's recognition of individual differences in the degree of spiritual progress guided not only the form of organization which the societies assumed but also the work and methods of the preachers. Preaching is to be graded. To give patients with varied spiritual distempers in different stages the same treatment is quackery of the worst sort, and they who do it are not physicians but "spiritual montebanks."[225] "The cure of spiritual, as of bodily diseases, must be as various as are the causes of them. The first thing, therefore, is, to find out the cause; and this will naturally point out the cure."[226] In a letter "On Preaching Christ," dated December 20, 1751, Wesley contrasts preaching the law with preaching the gospel—the two general heads in the minister's message. By preaching the law is meant setting forth the commandments of Christ to love God and one's neighbor and to be meek, humble, and holy, especially as these are found in the Sermon on the Mount. By preaching the gospel is meant declaring God's whole plan of salvation through Christ whereby power is given to obey the commandments of Christ, with all the blessings that follow. After a general statement of God's love for sinners and his desire for their salvation, the law should be preached as strongly, as closely, as searchingly as possible with but slight intermixture of the gospel, "showing it, as it were, afar off." Then as the hearers are convinced of sin, and as they repent, bring in more and more of the gospel, yet not too hastily, but combined with the law. After they are justified and on the way to complete sanctification, present the law again with increasing emphasis upon its meaning in the light of the gospel, stressing obedience to it now rather as the privilege of the saved than as a command upon those seeking salvation.[227] But here no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down, for most congregations are composed of people in all stages of spiritual development. Only where the hearers are all distinctly of the same attainment should the message center on one phase, either

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[225] *Works*, I, 413.

[226] *Ibid.*

[227] *Ibid.*, VI, 555–558. See also, for ampler statement of the distinction between the law and the gospel, *Works*, I, 223.

of the law in the light of the gospel or the gospel intermixed with the law and enforced by it.[228] What Wesley was concerned about was that the law should be stressed as much as it deserved as the normal way of convicting sinners. The preachers were given to preaching the gospel on all occasions and so slighting the very foundations of religion.[229] The gospel may awaken one in a thousand, but the law is the ordinary method God uses to bring about this effect, reserving the gospel to regenerate them. The propriety of this procedure is enforced by the authority of the Scripture, by Christ's employment of it, and by the very nature of the scheme of salvation. "It is absurd, therefore, to offer a physician to them that are whole, or at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them that they are sick; otherwise they will not thank you for your labor."[230] To reverse the order would be to cast pearls before swine.[231] "The holy, the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, . . . are not to be prostituted unto these men." You must begin to "talk to them in their own manner, and upon their own principles. . . . Reserve higher subjects for men of attainments."[232] It was on this ground that Wesley objected to William Law's tract *On the Spirit of Prayer.* It commends to men that they practice the presence of God just as they are first entering the religious life, while still unawakened and unacquainted with their sinful condition. This, according to Wesley, on the contrary, should constitute not the first but one of the last phases of religious experience.[233]

[228] *Ibid.*, VI, 556–557.
[229] *Ibid.*, I, 316.
[230] *Ibid.*, I, 317.
[231] *Ibid.*, I, 283, 317.
[232] *Ibid.*, I, 283.
[233] *Ibid.*, II, 195.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN: GENERAL THEORY

I. Wesley's Belief in the Religion of Childhood

WESLEY'S position with respect to the religious education of children follows logically from his theology. We have seen that he believed in the depravity of the entire human race, including its youngest members, that both young and old are by nature entirely lacking in God's natural and moral image, and in consequence as entirely alienated from him. We have also seen that he believed in the equally universal extension of grace, making it possible for him to hold the seeming paradox that all men are by nature evil, yet no man is altogether evil, for no one is in a state of mere nature. We have further seen that salvation from sin is the main purpose of life, that it begins in repentance, which is the knowledge and conviction of man's despicable condition and of the certain and deserved damnation following from it unless it can be changed. This change, it was seen, is, in the man himself, a new birth or regeneration, and, in his relation to God, justification conditioned by the faith that the redemptive work of Christ is efficacious in his particular case. The consequence in the life of the individual is inward and outward holiness or piety, a growing experience in the love of God and mankind, maintained and nourished by the use of the means of grace.

The application Wesley made of these doctrines to the life of children is found in incidental passages scattered here and there in his writings, but more particularly in his sermons and works dealing almost exclusively with children. Two of these have already been mentioned, namely, "A Treatise on Baptism" and the sermon "On the Education of Children." Other works are: a sermon "On Family Religion" and another "On Obedience to Parents"; a tract, which first appeared in the *Arminian*

Magazine in 1783, called "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children"; three articles, "A Short Account of the School, Near Bristol," "A Plain Account of the Kingswood School," and "Remarks on the State of Kingswood School"; and, finally, a tract entitled "Serious Thoughts Concerning Godfathers and Godmothers." A sermon preached to some children in Bolton on the text, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; and I will teach you the fear of the Lord," would be of great value, were it available, in determining Wesley's manner of addressing children directly; but it is not even known whether he ever committed it to writing.[1] The chief sources of insight into the subject matter and the method Wesley employed in teaching religion to children are the tracts, "Tokens for Children," "Lessons for Children," "Instructions for Children," and "Prayers for Children."

Wesley firmly believed that a genuine and deeply religious life is possible in childhood. At just what age he expected to see holiness manifested is difficult to say. Very often the ages of the children to whom he refers as undergoing religious experiences are not recorded. Often they are spoken of as groups or classes. Even when given, the ages are only approximate. The children are said to be about such an age, or as between certain ages, or as either of one age or of the next. Exactness, however, in fixing the precise age is not particularly necessary, for Wesley set no rigid time in early life before which it is impossible to be pious. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find him citing several instances of piety in children of extremely tender years.

The youngest example of such piety is that of a child who died at the age of two years and a half. It was a case that struck his attention as rare and phenomenal, and was credible to him only because it was backed by such solid testimony. It was "such a child," he says, "as is scarce heard of in a century." He records it in his *Journal* of April 8, 1755. "Through much hail, rain, and wind we got to Mr. B[addiley]'s, at Hayfield,

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[1] *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, IV, 119.

about five in the afternoon. His favorite daughter died some hours before we came, such a child as is scarce heard of in a century. All the family informed me of many remarkable circumstances, which else would have seemed incredible. She spake exceeding plain, yet very seldom; and then only a few words. She was scarce ever seen to laugh, or heard to utter a light or trifling word. She could not bear any that did, nor any one who behaved in a light or unserious manner. If any such offered to kiss or touch her, she would turn away, and say, 'I don't like you.' If her brother or sisters spoke angrily to each other, or behaved triflingly, she either sharply reproved (when that seemed needful) or tenderly entreated them to give over. If she had spoke too sharply to any, she would humble herself to them, and not rest till they had forgiven her. After her health declined she was particularly pleased with hearing that hymn sung, 'Abba, Father,' and would be frequently singing that line herself: 'Abba, Father, hear my cry!' On Monday, April 7, without a struggle, she fell asleep, having lived two years and six months."[2]

The case of a pious boy three years of age is entered in the *Journal* of June 28, 1746. "I inquired more particularly of Mrs. Nowers concerning her little son. She said he appeared to have a continual fear of God, and an awful sense of his presence; that he frequently went to prayers by himself, and prayed for his father and many others by name; that he had an exceeding great tenderness of conscience, being sensible of the least sin, and crying and refusing to be comforted when he thought he had in anything displeased God; that a few days since he broke out in prayer aloud, and then said: 'Mamma, I shall go to heaven soon, and be with the little angels. And you will go there too, and my papa; but you will not go so soon;' that, the day before, he went to a little girl in the house and said: 'Polly, you and I must go to prayers. Don't mind your doll; kneel down now: I must go to prayers: God bids me.' When the Holy Ghost teaches, is there any delay in learning? This child

[2] *Journal*, IV, 110–111.

was then just three years old! A year or two after he died in peace."[3]

The instance of another unusual girl is entered in the *Journal* of September 16, 1744. The entry preceding records the burial of a young man converted on his death-bed and gives proper setting to this account. "I buried, near the same place, one who had soon finished her course, going to God in the full assurance of faith when she was little more than four years old. In her last sickness (having been deeply serious in her behaviour for several months before) she spent all the intervals of her convulsions in speaking of, or to, God. And when she perceived her strength to be near exhausted, she desired all the family to come near, and prayed for them all, one by one; then for her ministers, for the church, and for all the world. A short time after, recovering from a fit, she lifted up her eyes, said, 'Thy kingdom come,' and died."[4]

The last example of piety in extremely tender years that will be recorded here, and the only other one given in detail by Wesley, is recorded without any but introductory comment in the *Journal* of May 29, 1750. "I inquired concerning Richard Hutchinson, of whom I had heard many speak. His mother informed me: 'It was about August last, being then above four years old, that he began to talk much of God, and to ask abundance of questions concerning him. From that time he never played nor laughed, but was as serious as one of threescore. He constantly reproved any that cursed or swore, or spoke indecently in his hearing, and frequently mourned over his brother, who was two or three years older, saying, "I fear my brother will go to hell, for he does not love God." About Christmas I cut off his hair; on which he said, "You cut off my hair because you are afraid I shall have the smallpox; but I am not afraid; I am not afraid to die, for I love God." About three weeks ago he sent for all of the society whom he knew, saying he must take his leave of them; which he did, speaking to them, one by one, in the most tender and affectionate manner. Four

[3] *Ibid.*, III, 244.
[4] *Ibid.*, III, 150.

days after he fell ill of the smallpox, and was light-headed almost as soon as he was taken; but all his incoherent sentences were either exhortation, or pieces of hymns, or prayer. The worse he was the more earnest he was to die, saying, "I must go home; I will go home." One said, "You are at home." He earnestly replied, "No; this is not my home; I will go to heaven." On the tenth day of his illness he raised himself up and said: "Let me go; let me go to my Father; I will go home. Now, now I will go to my Father." After which he lay down and died.'"[5]

One would not attach too much weight to these somber records. They do, however, show that Wesley believed it was possible for very young children to be religious, and they also give some idea of the nature of the religion, which, though striking him as unusual in children so young, he would cultivate as early as possible. It is a piety marked by a seriousness of temper and behavior, a slight mystic sense, a tender conscience, and a deep concern for the spiritual condition of others. It is in accord with Wesley's definition of holiness—the love of God and mankind. It is true that these records came second-handed to him; but he went out of his way to get them, and believed them authentic, whether anyone else did or not. Evidently, he did not believe that their experiences were merely the result of social suggestion. He does not suggest that he might have considered their condition, in part at least, abnormal and pathological. His comments are scant. He just accepts them as precociously pious.

His reasons for holding to the possibility of mature religious consciousness in children so young lie in his doctrine of grace, that when the Spirit is the teacher there is no delay in learning.[6] The things of God cannot be pressed too soon upon them. "If you say, 'Nay, but they cannot understand you when they are so young,' I answer, No; nor when they are fifty years old, unless God opens their understanding. And can he not do this at any age?"[7]

[5] *Ibid.*, III, 475.
[6] *Ibid.*, III, 244.
[7] *Works*, II, 431.

Although these extreme cases are recorded by Wesley, by far the majority of children of whom he speaks as being under religious impressions are considerably older. Most of them are in later childhood, that is, on the verge of adolescence, or in adolescence. One group reported as seriously moved toward salvation is composed of children from six to fourteen.[8] The children of the schools in Kingswood affected by the recurring revivals there were between the ages of seven and fourteen, if the only accounts that mention ages may be taken as typical.[9] Quite frequent mention is made of children under religious impressions between the ages of eight and ten. The Weardale Society elicited Wesley's warm praise because the family religion of its members was so strong. He reports that "in most of their families, the greatest part of the children above ten years old are converted to God."[10] More children, however, are mentioned between the ages of nine and fifteen than of younger years. The age at which Wesley believed he himself to be ripe for some spiritual change was ten, for it was then that he thought he had sinned away the "washing of the Holy Ghost" which he had received at baptism.[11] He confesses, however, that the instructions he received in childhood concerning outward duties and sins he accepted gladly and thought of often, "but all that was said to me of inward obedience or holiness I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was indeed as ignorant of the true meaning of the law as I was of the gospel of Christ."[12] If in later years he remembered his own early experience, he must have been reluctant in accepting reports of piety of any depth in very young children, at least in any under ten. But it does not appear that this influenced his later dealings with children.

These older children, in Wesley's estimation, are capable of experiencing every step in the process of salvation. Many are in deep distress, seriously concerned over their natural state,

[8] *Journal*, VI, 514.
[9] *Ibid.*, V, 258; VII, 94–95.
[10] *Ibid.*, V, 466.
[11] *Ibid.*, I, 465.
[12] *Ibid.*

convinced of sin and "under strong drawings."[13] Some are born again and "indisputably justified," and rejoicing in the peace of God.[14] Several are sanctified and saved from inward sin and are patterns of holiness.[15] In fact, the experiences of many of them match and in several instances surpass the experiences of their elders. Thus at the society in Dublin "thirteen or fourteen little maidens, in one class, are rejoicing in God their Saviour; and are as serious and stayed in their whole behaviour as if they were thirty or forty years old. I have much hopes that half of them will be steadfast in the grace of God which they now enjoy."[16] In a lovefeast at Epworth several children "spoke with the wisdom of the aged, though with the fire of youth. So out of the mouth of babes and sucklings did God perfect praise."[17] Wesley compares the children in the Weardale revival with the adults in the Everton revival. Many children at Weardale became young men in Christ, enjoying an experience deeper and a fellowship with God more constant than the oldest man or woman whom Wesley had ever seen or heard of at Everton, very few of these surpassing an infant state of grace.[18]

II. The Purpose of Religious Education

Wesley's theory of religious education is in keeping with his belief that every stage in religious experience is possible in childhood. The goal of all work with children at home, in the schools, and in the Methodist societies is to make them pious, to lead to personal religion, and to insure salvation. It is not merely to bring them up so that they do no harm and abstain from outward sin, nor to get them accustomed to the use of the means of grace, saying their prayers, reading good books, and the like, nor is it to train them in right opinions. The purpose of religious education is to instill in children true religion, holi-

[13] *Ibid.*, III, 236, 237; IV, 279–280; V, 255, 258–260, 362, 388, 485, 524–526; VI, 514–515; VII, 23, etc.

[14] *Ibid.*, III, 266, 466; IV, 27; V, 152, 258–260, 362, 524–526; VI, 4, 78–79; VII, 68, 75.

[15] *Ibid.*, V, 464; VII, 75, etc.

[16] *Ibid.*, VII, 68.

[17] *Ibid.*, VI, 352.

[18] *Ibid.*, V, 471–472.

ness, and the love of God and mankind, and to train them in the image of God.

The making of everything that is done for them subordinate to their growth in religion is emphasized in every important writing of Wesley's that bears on children. He deplores the neglect of "family religion, the grand desideratum among the Methodists."[19] If something is not done to acquaint the children with real religion, the present revival will die away in a short time. And so he advises parents to train them up in the way they should go, and directs his preachers to go from house to house and enforce a return to family worship. He also makes it their duty to engage actively in the training of the children themselves.[20]

In caring for the continuation of the children's education after their training at home, Wesley was guided by the same purpose of making everything subservient to religion. He set forth principles to lead parents in the choice of the right school. To decide which school to send them to, it is necessary, he says, to settle a previous question of the purpose of higher education. It is to extend their training for heaven as well as for this life. That school, then, is the only proper one whose masters take this to be the goal of education and will zealously keep it before the children, instructing them in religion as well as learning.[21] Such schools were hard to find in Wesley's day. The large public schools "are nurseries of all manner of wickedness," and the boys should not be sent to them. Girls should not be sent to large boarding schools, for there they will be taught by the other girls "everything which a Christian woman ought not to learn" and will be unable to continue in the fear of God and save their souls. If possible, therefore, parents should bring up their girls themselves; otherwise send them to God-fearing mistresses who keep only so many pupils as to be able to pay personal attention to each one of them, and whose lives are examples of what the children should become.[22] "Methodist parents, who would send

[19] *Ibid.*, V, 193.
[20] *Works*, II, 301; *Minutes*, I, 51, 62, 67.
[21] *Ibid.*, II, 305–306.
[22] *Works*, II, 306.

your girls headlong to hell, send them to a fashionable boarding-school!"[23]

But Wesley did not leave the matter with a condemnation of existing conditions. He indorsed for the Methodist people several private mistresses and schools of the right sort.[24] Miss Owen's boarding-school for girls at Publow he regarded as a pattern, perhaps the best in Great Britain.[25] Curnock suggests that some arrangement may have existed between this school and the Methodists, and that perhaps Wesley had subsidized it.[26] He also asserts that its existence was due to Wesley's encouragement.[27] When Miss Owen removed from Publow, Miss Bishop set up a school for girls at Keynsham continuing the Christian tradition, much to Wesley's satisfaction.[28] These teachers, together with Miss Bosanquet, who ran an orphan school, he regarded as ideal teachers for girls.[29] Their teaching led to the knowledge and love of God. And such should be the result of all teaching. The true Christian school will first make Christians, and then teach other matters. Thus he wrote to Miss Bishop: "Make Christians, my dear sister, make Christians! Let this be your leading view. . . . Let everything else you teach be subordinate to this. Mind one thing in all. Let it be said of the young women you educate,

> 'Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eyes,
> In all her gestures sanctity and love.' "[30]

When Wesley was on his way to Georgia he wrote to his brother Samuel, headmaster at Tiverton School, Devonshire, that the souls in his school were committed to him by God to be prepared for heaven, to be instructed in the gospel as well as in Greek and Latin, to be built up in the knowledge and love of God.

[23] *Journal*, V, 452.
[24] *Works*, II, 306.
[25] *Journal*, VI, 78–79; *Minutes*, I, 113.
[26] *Ibid.*, VI, 118, note 1; see also *Minutes*, I, 119, 125.
[27] *Ibid.*, V, 484, note 3.
[28] *Ibid.*, VI, 336.
[29] *Ibid.*, V, 375–376; 375, note 3; 484, note 3.
[30] *Works*, VII, 243.

"You are even now called to the converting of heathens, as well as I."[31]

The way in which Wesley conducted charity schools and the Kingswood School for the higher education of Methodist boys lends further support to his belief in the primacy of religion in education. The charity school for colliers' children in Kingswood (not to be confused with the boarding-school there) was similar in curriculum to the contemporary charity schools, with greater emphasis upon religious instruction.[32] There it was "proposed, in the usual hours of the day, to teach chiefly the poorer children to read, write, and cast accounts; but more especially (by God's assistance) to 'know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.'"[33] The charity school conducted at the Foundery Society in London supplies the most detailed information of Wesley's ideal for charity schools. Many of the children, he says, of the Foundery were kept from school by the poverty of their parents, and consequently ran wild, while those who attended school acquired the rudiments of learning but were "under almost a necessity of learning heathenism at the same time," so that it would have been better for them to lack that knowledge than to have purchased it so dearly. So he undertook to teach them, with the aid of two schoolmasters, in his own home at the Foundery.[34] When the Foundery was relinquished and the society moved to City Road Chapel, a charity school was commenced there in the course of five or six years.[35] Wesley's sole reference to it is that he preached to raise funds for it, and that children are there "trained up both for this world and the world to come."[36]

Wesley was led to establish the New School at Kingswood for the higher education of boys because of a dearth of the right sort of boarding-schools. It was to be a model Christian institu-

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[31] *Ibid.*, VI, 601.
[32] North: *Early Methodist Philanthropy*, 81.
[33] *Journal*, II, 323.
[34] *Works*, V, 188–189.
[35] Stevenson: *History of City Road Chapel*, 88, 333.
[36] *Journal*, VII, 222.

tion[37] "which would not disgrace the apostolic age."[38] Its two outstanding features were to be "sound religious training and perfect control of the children."[39] At the opening of the school in 1748, Wesley preached his sermon "On the Education of Children," from the text, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it."[40] The key-words to the educational ideal he had in mind for it are in the hymn written by Charles Wesley for the opening service:

"Come Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To whom we for our children cry,
The good desired and wanted most
Out of thy richest grace supply,
The sacred discipline be given
To train and bring them up for heaven.

"Answer on them that end of all
Our cares and pains, and studies here,
On them, recovered from their fall,
Stampt with the heavenly character,
Raised by the nurture of the Lord,
To all their paradise restored.

"Error and ignorance remove,
Their blindness both of heart and mind,
Give them the wisdom from above,
Spotless, and peaceable, and kind.
In knowledge pure their mind renew,
And store with thoughts divinely true.

"Learning's redundant part and vain
Be here cut off, and cast aside:
But let them, Lord, the substance gain,
In every solid truth abide,
Swiftly acquire, and ne'er forego
The knowledge fit for man to know.

"Unite the pair so long disjoined
Knowledge and vital piety,
Learning and holiness combined,
And truth and love let all men see.

[37] *Works*, VII, 345.

[38] A quotation from Wesley cited in *The History of the Kingswood School*, by *Three Old Boys*, 13.

[39] *Ibid.*, 14.

[40] *Journal*, III, 356.

In these whom up to thee we give,
Thine, wholly thine to die and live.

"Father, accept them in thy Son,
And ever by thy Spirit guide,
Thy wisdom in their lives be shewn,
Thy name confessed and glorified,
Thy power and love diffused abroad,
'Till all our earth is filled with God."[41]

Wesley's interest also in the Sunday-school movement, to the inception of which Methodism made its contribution, even anticipating it by fourteen years, was chiefly because he saw in it a great potentiality for making Christians. To be sure, he approved of the Sunday schools because of their philanthropic features and called them "one of the noblest specimens of charity which have been set on foot in England since the time of William the Conqueror."[42] But he saw in them much more besides. In the first reference he makes to them in his *Journal,* in 1784, he thinks that God may have a deeper purpose for them than is evident to men. "So many children in one parish are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners, at least, as well as to read the Bible. I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"[43] Three years later, as the movement gains impetus, he writes to a friend: "It seems these will be one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation. I wonder Satan has not sent some able champion against them."[44] Seeing in the Sunday school a great auxiliary to the Methodist reformation, he gave it his hearty support.[45]

Such, according to Wesley, as seen from many points of view, is the chief object of all work with and for children. In

[41] Charles Wesley: *Hymns for Children and Others of Riper Years,* 35–36.

[42] From a letter to Duncan Wright, cited by Tyerman: *The Life and Times of John Wesley,* III, 522.

[43] *Journal,* VII, 3.

[44] From a letter to Richard Rodda, cited by Tyerman, *op. cit.,* III, 500.

[45] See Wardle: *History of the Sunday School Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

the home, in the schools, and in the societies it is to make Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

III. The Salvation of Children by Baptism and Training

As to the actual process by which this is to be begun and carried out, there are seemingly conflicting views in Wesley. One is made to feel that Wesley himself was conscious of a strife between his theory and his practice. In theory, the first step in the redemption of the child is baptism. The new birth, the beginning of the inward change, is reached by adults through baptism only on condition that they repent and believe the gospel.[46] But it is reached by children through the outward sign of baptism without this condition, for they can neither repent nor believe.[47] For them, regeneration is annexed to their baptism unconditionally. Wesley's views on infant baptism, as before indicated, are found in his father's *Short Discourse of Baptism.* There should be no hesitancy in regarding it as representing Wesley's personal opinions on the subject, for he published it as his own, under the title, *A Treatise on Baptism,* when he was over fifty years of age. This work gives several reasons in support of the view that infants are proper subjects of baptism. Infants are guilty of original sin, and they cannot be saved ordinarily unless this is washed away by baptism. They are included in the evangelical covenant with God and capable of solemn consecration to him, which can be made only by baptism. They have the right to come to Christ to be ingrafted into him, and ought to be brought to him for that purpose; but it necessitates their admittance into the church by baptism. Infant baptism was the practice of the apostles and has been held by the Christian Church ever since. Baptism regenerates, justifies, and gives the infant all the privileges of the Christian religion. For all these reasons, therefore, it is not only proper for parents to present their infants for baptism, but their sacred duty.[48]

This conception of baptism stated in terms of Wesley's

[46] *Works,* V, 36, 38; VI, 21.
[47] *Ibid.,* V, 38; VI, 21.
[48] *Ibid.,* VI, 16–22.

theological system means that children by that rite are born again and brought into right relationship to God, that the bent of their nature toward evil is arrested and set toward good, and that the diseases of nature are in the process of cure. It means that "herein a principle of grace is infused"[49] into them, and that they have entered an environment which will insure their development in that principle until they become holy. The work accomplished is so far effectual that if they die before they commit actual sin, they will be eternally saved.[50] And if they live, they need never again to pass through the porch of repentance and the door of faith unless they do commit actual sin. But it will be natural for them to sin, for the principle of nature is still in them at cross purposes with the principle of grace, just as it is in believers of riper years. Therefore they need constant attention from their earliest years.

This position presents a striking parallel to that held by the solitaries of the Little Schools of Port-Royal which flourished in France in the middle years of the seventeenth century. Mr. Bridgen, a contributing editor of the *New History of Methodism,* asserts that Samuel Wesley criticized, in his letters, many schools of thought, among them the Port-Royalists, and that these criticisms were known to his son John and influenced his theology.[51] Just what his attitude was toward the Port-Royalists and its effect upon John Wesley it has been impossible to determine. In his youth he came to know Pascal through his mother,[52] and later read his *Thoughts.*[53] He is the only member of the Port-Royal community to whom Wesley makes reference in his writings. Even if he were closely familiar with their work, he would have taken issue with their rigid conception of predestination and God's arbitrary selection of those upon whom he will confer grace. He would also have objected to their doctrine of absolution for those who had fallen into deadly sin after baptism.

[49] *Works,* VI, 15.

[50] *Ibid.,* VI, 14.

[51] *A New History of Methodism,* I, 167.

[52] Publications of the Wesley Historical Society, No. III, *Mrs. Wesley's Conference With Her Daughter, An Original Essay by Mrs. Susanna Wesley,* 39.

[53] *Journal,* IV, 45.

But he was closely akin to much in their theology, and, as will be seen later, in their educational method. They believed that infants are in a state of original sin and guilty of it, that baptism restores them to innocency, but that since they retain their corrupt nature, despite baptism, they are in danger of falling again into sin. The only way to conserve their innocency is to guard them completely from contamination during their helpless years and at the same time to build character that they may resist evil by their own strength when they become of age. This is the task of education.[54]

Wesley's practical position, it may be inferred, is similar to this. Baptism but begins the change in human nature and is to be followed by proper and careful instruction and discipline. The new birth no more cures children entirely of their spiritual diseases, nor sets altogether aright the wrong bias of their nature, than it does for adults. They still possess tendencies to evil, and are still beset by the diseases of pride, self-will, and love of the world in which they are born. Justification and regeneration represent but the door to religion. Religion itself is holiness through the knowledge and love of God. So that even though baptized they are not necessarily holy, certainly not in the highest degree. But they are to become so. They are to "grow in grace in the same proportion as they grow in years."[55] The goal is to make predominant the principle of grace and to overcome the principle of nature. This is to be done, with the help of God, by discipline and teaching. "This is the most probable method for making their children pious, which any parents can take."[56] Your children are "immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, intrusted to your care, that you may train them up in all holiness, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity."[57] "The grand end of education" is to cure the diseases of human nature.[58] "The bias of nature is set the wrong way: education is designed to set it right. This, by the grace of

[54] Barnard: *The Little Schools of Port-Royal*, 53–54.
[55] *Works*, II, 305.
[56] *Ibid.*, II, 308.
[57] *Ibid.*, II, 302.
[58] *Ibid.*, II, 310.

God, is to turn the bias from self-will, pride, anger, revenge, and the love of the world, to resignation, lowliness, meekness, and the love of God."[59] This work, begun by parents, is to be continued in the schools by instructors "that will tread in the same steps."[60] But, as has already been indicated, it is a task of great difficulty to find teachers of this sort. That is the reason Wesley was so careful to guide parents in the choice of schools for their children.

For the same reason he was concerned in the choice parents made of godfathers and godmothers for their children at baptism. Only those should be chosen who are of the highest Christian character and who will be certain to perform their duty faithfully. Wesley's brief tract entitled *Serious Thoughts Concerning Godfathers and Godmothers* states his anxiety over the neglect of this office. Many in his day were hesitant to answer for children at baptism because of the mistaken notion that their duty was to promise that the child would "renounce the devil and all his works, constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments." As a matter of fact, Wesley points out, not the sponsor but the child promises this. The sponsor, according to the Liturgy, undertakes to see to it that the infant realizes as soon as he is able the nature and solemnity of his profession, and to influence him to attend worship, learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and all things else he should know for the health of his soul, that he may be brought up to lead a holy life. Failure on the part of sponsors to understand the nature of their duty was leading to a neglect of it. Furthermore, many parents in Wesley's day were apparently choosing godfathers and godmothers regardless of their fitness for their task. He therefore advises them to select only those who truly fear and serve God and who will perform their undertaking with knowledge and love. If this evil is remedied and parents and sponsors cooperate to train their children, "what a foundation of holiness and happiness may be laid, even to your late posterity!"[61]

[59] *Ibid.*, VII, 459.
[60] *Ibid.*, VII, 460.
[61] *Ibid.*, VI, 235–236.

IV. The Salvation of Children by Training and Conversion

Wesley's theory that infants are born again at baptism and that training is the most probable method of making children pious is seemingly at odds with his practice of expecting and inducing the new birth in children beyond the years of infancy. For instance, at the opening of the New Kingswood School he preached his sermon "On the Education of Children," which contains his most detailed advice concerning the cure of the diseases of human nature.[62] Inasmuch as the students of this school were to be drawn largely from Methodist homes, and, in part at least, from preachers' homes, it is to be expected that they would be baptized. Yet Wesley encouraged the experience of the new birth in these children not only during his own frequent meetings with them but also through their masters. The *Journal* records also that he preached on education in other places—Bristol, Manchester, London—using this same sermon.[63] There is no reason for believing that in these places he refrained from stimulating children to regeneration. On the contrary, according to the *Journal,* wherever he met children his chief work was to cultivate in them a sense of their sinful nature and a desire for a cure, by talks on their natural state, and on the first principles of religion, namely, repentance and faith.[64] All the evidence points to the fact that he labored as strenuously to bring children into the instantaneous experience of religion as he advised parents to train them up in religion.

Is it possible to reconcile Wesley's faith in religious education with his application of the revival methods to children? He believed, it will be recalled, that anyone who has sinned after his baptism has denied that rite and therefore must have recourse to another new birth if he is to be saved, just as the Port-Royalists believed in the necessity of absolution after losing baptismal innocency. If an individual, who before he had the use of reason was consecrated to God and set apart as a temple for the Holy Spirit, has been serving the devil since he came to the

[62] *Journal,* III, 356.
[63] *Ibid.,* V, 189, 193, 253; VII, 99.
[64] *Ibid.,* IV, 279–280; V, 388; etc.

use of reason and has been setting up in his heart pride, the love of the world, anger, lust, foolish desire, and other sinful affections, he has denied his baptism and cannot be saved without being born again. Also, any willful sin, such as lying, profaning the Lord's Day or the Lord's name, is a denial of baptism, as much as sinful affections, and necessitates a new birth.[65] It is a severe ideal; but Wesley held it up before the people. And it is seen that it was no temporary opinion from the fact that this aspect of his teaching is stressed in two of his most important sermons, "The Marks of the New Birth" and "The New Birth." Now, since Wesley believed that reason dawns in the child when he begins to walk or talk, he is justified logically in holding that the benefits of baptism may be lost early in life, for from then on willful sin becomes possible. He was convinced that he himself had sinned away the benefits of baptism at an early age. He saw parents neglecting the religious training of their children. He came into constant contact with children running wild in sin, lying and profaning the Lord's Day and name. These seem to have given him reason enough for holding that children must actually be born again. But, it must be noticed, his teaching that the new birth is necessary under the conditions of a denial of baptism is not in conflict with his educational position. It is, rather, a strong confirmation of it, for only by strict training will it be possible to retain the benefits of baptism. The revival methods would be necessary only where Christian nurture had failed.

There is no evidence to show that Wesley ever put the foregoing theory into practice. The evidence points to another theory altogether, according to which the aims of the revival method and religious education are the same. This theory pays no attention whatever to baptismal regeneration but implies the need of regeneration under all circumstances. It is the theory that conversion—to use the term disliked by Wesley—is universally necessary for children as well as adults. Professor Rishell points out in a brief article in the *Methodist Review* on "Wesley and Other Methodist Fathers on Childhood Religion,"

[65] *Works*, I, 160–161, 406–407.

of which only a little over three pages and a half are devoted to Wesley, that Wesley did not believe conversion to be necessary for children, generally or universally, but that he believed in the effectiveness of religious instruction apart from conversion as the way to the religious life.[66] In proof he cites random sentences from Wesley, such as the following from the sermon "On Family Religion": "The wickedness of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents." It is well to quote from Wesley's paragraph in more detail. "Is there not a generation arisen, even within this period, yea, and from pious parents, that know not the Lord? That have neither his love in their hearts nor his fear before their eyes? How many of them already 'despise their fathers, and mock at the counsel of their mothers!' How many are utter strangers to real religion, to the life and power of it! And not a few have shaken off all religion, and abandoned themselves to all manner of wickedness! Now, although this may sometimes be the case, even of children educated in a pious manner, yet this case is very rare: I have met with some, but not many instances of it. The wickedness of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents. For it is a general, though not universal rule, though it admits of some exceptions, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"[67]

Now, Rishell's unguarded position is not tenable. For, as a matter of fact, Wesley did not hold that a religious education makes conversion unnecessary, but that religious education and conversion supplement each other. All that he states in the passage which Rishell uses to support his interpretation is, that where there is no religion in the children the parents are usually to blame for not training them in a pious way. What Wesley really means by this and by the more positive statement that training is the most probable method of making children pious can be discovered only by defining more closely what constitutes the training of children in his theory. He gives the concept of

[66] *Methodist Review*, LXXXIV, 779.

[67] *Works*, II, 301.

training and education a wider connotation than they usually carry. He uses them to include not only the bringing of children to a knowledge and appreciation of the conditions of salvation, but also to their personal appropriation of salvation. Religious education must lead to the experience of regeneration with its resultant life of holiness. It must aim to produce repentance and faith, that is, the knowledge of self and of God through Christ, and the life of inward and outward piety which naturally follows. This is made clear by a section from the sermon "On Family Religion," a few lines following the sentence which Rishell quotes. The text is from Joshua 24. 15: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Wesley inquires, "What is it to 'serve the Lord,' not as a Jew, but as a Christian? Not only with an outward service (though some of the Jews undoubtedly went farther than this), but with inward; with the service of the heart, 'worshiping him in spirit and in truth.' The first thing implied in this service is faith—believing in the name of the Son of God. We cannot perform an acceptable service to God till we believe on Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Here the spiritual worship begins. As soon as any one has the witness in himself, as soon as he can say, 'The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' he is able truly to 'serve the Lord.'" This is nothing else than Wesley's description of the experience of regeneration and justification by faith. From this starting point he proceeds to show that the love of God follows the belief, and the love of neighbor necessarily accompanies the love of God. He finally shows that to serve the Lord means to obey him. This is the first head of the sermon. The second asks, Who are included under the expression "my house"? And Wesley answers, "The children along with the wife and servants."[68] In other words, children are to be trained to serve the Lord; but they cannot serve him without the experience of regeneration and justification. Therefore, to train children up in the way they should go means to lead them ultimately into the experience of salvation in much the same way that an adult is led

[68] *Ibid.*, II, 301–302.

into it. It is true, as Rishell says, that Wesley believed that the sins of children are due to the neglect of parents; but the neglect of parents is not simply failure to give their children a few lessons in religion. It is more serious than this. It is failure to induce in them the ordered stages of the experience of real religion as set forth in his theology. Training must be a converting process.

Wesley's position in the sermon "On the Education of Children" is seen to coincide with this view. There to train children in the way they should go means to cure them of their inherent diseases—pride, atheism, love of the world, self-will, etc. But since Wesley identifies the cure of these diseases with real religion, there is no conflict between the two sermons. The cure of pride and atheism results in a knowledge of self and a knowledge of God, repentance, and faith. The cure of the love of the world and self-will results in the love of God and obedience to his will. To cure the diseases of nature and to train the individual in religion mean the same thing.[69]

Wesley's tract, *A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children,* also suggests the harmony of these two positions, although, since it is a polemic, it does not labor with details. On the first page Wesley is defending the education children receive at Kingswood and in the schools run by Miss Bosanquet and Miss Owen. His critic has been saying that children brought up severely turn out worse than those left to develop more naturally. In answer to this, Wesley points to these schools and says that the children educated in them will be worse than others only on condition that they have never been converted or have quenched the Spirit subsequent to conversion. He thus identifies conversion with at least a part of the educative process. On the next page Wesley says true religion ought to be instilled into children as early as possible, that education is designed to set aright the bias of nature, to cure the diseases of self-will, pride, etc.[70] Therefore to train children in the way of real religion is to regenerate them, to cure the corruption of their nature.

[69] *Ibid.*, II, 307ff.

[70] *Ibid.*, VII, 458–459.

And inasmuch as it should begin with the first dawn of reason, before there has been any possibility of the loss of the effects of baptism, it would seem to be a regeneration process added to the regeneration received at baptism. And this training should include the more gradual processes of Christian nurture. The methods of the revival will be employed to supplement and to quicken the processes of nurture.

The close relationship between the process of adult salvation and child education should be emphasized. The foundation of real religion is the knowledge of self and of God through Christ; that is, repentance and faith. Since salvation is from original sin and from the inherited bias of nature as well as from actual sin, the actual process whereby it is accomplished does not need to wait until sin has been committed, although in the case of adults it is so delayed. Two significant statements in Wesley's teaching harmonize at this point: the doctrine of original sin and faith grounded thereon is the only foundation of true piety; and, training is the most probable method of making children pious. To understand this more fully, it is necessary to study in greater detail his educational theories and the manner of their application. To this task the chapter to follow will address itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN: PARTICULAR THEORIES AND METHODS

I. The Influence of Mrs. Susanna Wesley Upon the Educational Theory of John Wesley

ALTHOUGH Wesley was a leader of popular education and did much to advance the intellectual condition of the English people, stressing especially their religious development, it cannot be said that he made any brilliant discoveries in the theory or method of education, either religious or secular. In many ways he was a child of the eighteenth century and shared its blindness to the meaning of childhood. Many of his educational views are unquestionably eccentric. Nevertheless, he did entertain several enlightened views as well.

In his writings there are echoes of several educational reformers. Mention has already been made of the educational work of the Religious Societies, and of Wesley's debt to them, as well as of their debt to him. He learned much from the Moravians in Georgia, and more from them in Germany.[1] Some of his ideas are in accord with John Amos Comenius, the Moravian pioneer of education of the seventeenth century; but whether he had read his works, as his brother Charles had read his life, cannot be ascertained. He read and admired Milton's *Tractate on Education,* and acknowledges his indebtedness to it.[2] He was powerfully influenced by Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding,* and it is probable, as Mr. Bridgen asserts, that he knew the *Thoughts on Education.*[3] He had read Rousseau's *Emile,* but found it a "most empty, silly, injudicious thing."[4]

[1] *Works,* VII, 348. For full account of Wesley's visit to the Moravians in Germany, see *Journal,* II, 23–63.

[2] *Ibid.,* VII, 341.

[3] *Ibid.,* VII, 336; *A New History of Methodism,* I, 218.

[4] *Ibid.,* VII, 458.

There is no evidence that he was favorably startled by any of its doctrines. Froebel was born but eight years before Wesley's death, and Pestalozzi did not wield an influence in England until long after. Wesley evidently received but little inspiration from such of these educational reformers as he came to know, although some of his opinions are strikingly similar to theirs.

He derived more of his convictions concerning the education of children from his cultured and pious mother, Mrs. Susanna Wesley, than from any other source. His right to instruct parents was questioned several times.[5] On one of these occasions, when he preached on the education of children and the management of families, although many were convinced of their duty, "some still made that very silly answer, 'Oh, he has no children of his own!' Neither had Saint Paul, nor (that we know) any of the apostles. What then? Were they, therefore, unable to instruct parents? Not so. They were able to instruct everyone that had a soul to be saved."[6] That he possessed such a detailed program of how children should be managed, not having any of his own, was due largely to his remembrance of his mother's management of the numerous children of the Epworth Rectory, and especially to an account she gave him in writing of the principles on which she based her management.

Ten of the nineteen children of the Epworth Rectory survived infancy. Their training was almost exclusively in the hands of Mrs. Wesley, a task for which she was eminently qualified. She refused to send her children to the local schoolmaster, John Holland, because of his notorious incompetency and wickedness.[7] She preferred to teach them herself. She prepared her three boys for secondary school, only one of them receiving any outside supplementary training.[8] Practically all the education her daughters received seems to have come from her.[9] So thorough was their training that several of them became unusually cultured for their day, and one attained out-

[5] *Journal*, V, 189, 253.
[6] *Ibid.*, V, 253.
[7] Telford: *Life of John Wesley*, 15.
[8] Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 64.
[9] Tyerman: *The Life and Times of John Wesley*, I, 18.

standing scholarship. She looked upon all her children as talents committed to her under trust by God, and although she desired that they should be versed in useful knowledge it was her "principal intention" to save their souls.[10] A deepened spiritual experience that came to her after the burning of the Rectory led her to resolve a more conscientious care of her children, and from that time she made it a habit to converse one evening a week with each child separately.[11] She devoted Thursday evening to John,[12] and was especially careful of him, seeing in his miraculous escape from the fire some deep providential meaning.[13] So deeply was the boy impressed by these conferences that at eight years of age he was adjudged by his father fit to receive holy communion.[14] In later life, amid the multifarious cares of a growing church, he pleaded that she spare some part of the same evening to prayer for him.[15] Mrs. Wesley prepared books suited to the children's needs, finding none available that met her severe requirements. Among these were an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, an exposition of the Ten Commandments,[16] and a "Religious Conference, Written for the Use of My Children," in the form of a dialogue with her daughter Amelia. Wesley knew this manuscript and refers to it as "My Mother's Conference with her Daughter."[17] During her husband's absences from Epworth she continued family worship and held services Sunday evenings for her children and servants, which neighbors also joined, often packing the house. At these services she read a sermon and prayers and discussed religious topics.[18] John Wesley observed of her shortly after her death that "she (as well as her father and grandfather, her husband,

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[10] From a letter quoted by Clarke, *op. cit.*, 47–48.

[11] From a letter quoted by Wesley, *Journal*, III, 32–34.

[12] *Ibid.*, 33.

[13] From Mrs. Wesley's Meditations, quoted by Moore: *Life of John Wesley*, I, 101.

[14] Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 122.

[15] *Works*, VI, 593.

[16] Mrs. Wesley's Conference, editor's preface, iii.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] From a letter quoted by Wesley, *Journal*, III, 32–34.

and her three sons), had been, in her measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness."[19]

Back of the rules of her "way of education," as she called it, and back of the intent that animates it, lies her theology, in the light of which alone it can be understood. Between her theology and that of her son John there is a marked similarity. It is because he agreed with her theology that he could accept the educational position that rests upon it. She believed that human nature, due to the Fall, is depraved in understanding, will, and affections, possessing a strong bias to evil, and that the root of all evil is self-will.[20] The first steps in one's recovery are repentance and faith, a deep and sincere sensibility of his condition, and an appropriation of the righteousness of Christ.[21] "Christ will be no Saviour to such as see not their need of one."[22] The freedom of the will is necessary if there is to be moral responsibility.[23] The speculations of philosophy are barren compared with the experimental knowledge of God through faith.[24] Yet reason is not to be denied its proper place in religion, for "the understanding is the highest and most noble power or faculty of the human soul."[25] This life is a probation for the next; therefore religion is man's one important business on earth, and all else of little moment in comparison.[26] In these points the theology of mother and son agrees. Yet for many years there was one fundamental difference. Not until old age did she believe in present forgiveness of sins, having scarce ever heard of such a thing until over a year after the knowledge and experience of it had reached her two sons.[27] Consequently she did not clearly distinguish between justification and sanctifica-

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[19] *Journal*, III, 32.

[20] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Wesley Family*, II, 40ff., 71–72, 80, 84; Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 183–184; Wesley, *Journal*, III, 36.

[21] Mrs. Wesley's Conference, 34.

[22] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 241.

[23] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Wesley Family*, II, 42.

[24] *Ibid.*, II, 78–79.

[25] Mrs. Wesley's Conference, 27. See also, 5.

[26] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 181, 183.

[27] *Journal*, II, 267–268.

tion, nor between justification by faith and by works.[28] The glad certainty of acceptance with God was consequently lacking in her theology, and seems to explain in part the defect in her system of education, namely, the lack in it of provision for a more inward experience.

In this setting of Mrs. Wesley's theology, to educate children into salvation becomes a serious and difficult enterprise. She was reluctant to write down her "way of education," for she did not believe it could be generally observed, being adapted only for those whose chief aim is to save the souls of their children, and who, fully appreciating the difficulty of the task, are willing to literally renounce the world to accomplish it.[29] It was important that training should be begun early. In a letter to "Jacky" at Oxford she states one of the guiding principles in her theory of education. "Believe me, dear son," she writes, "old age is the worst time we can choose to mend either our lives or our fortunes. If the foundations of solid piety are not laid betimes in sound principles and virtuous dispositions, and if we neglect, while strength and vigor last, to lay up something ere the infirmities of age overtake us, it is a hundred to one odds that we shall die both poor and wicked."[30] And yet, despite her insistence upon early piety and continuous training, she was deeply anxious lest her children should not be saved. She wants "Jacky" to examine himself and see if he is "in a state of faith and repentance or not," and if he has "a reasonable hope of salvation."[31] These and other like advices seem to indicate that her "way of education" does not exclude the necessity of regeneration any more than her son's way.[32]

The test of everything that touches life, according to Mrs. Wesley, is whether it furthers or hinders progress toward salvation. She does not with à Kempis condemn "all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless."[33] She permitted games of chance

[28] Clarke: *Wesley Family*, II, 119–120.
[29] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 47–48.
[30] *Ibid.*, 200.
[31] *Ibid.*, 181.
[32] *Ibid.*, 71, 90, 92.
[33] *Ibid.*, 184.

and skill, and even cards, in the Epworth home. Stevens, agreeing with Adam Clarke, is undoubtedly right in saying that John's early education was not unduly severe.[34] Certainly, it was not as severe as the educational program he later advocated. His mother followed and advised the rule which she observed in her youth, never in one day to spend more time in recreation than in private religious exercises.[35] Her sane criterion of the good or evil in pleasures, however innocent in themselves, is whether these things rob the mind and conscience of their mastery over the body, and dull the sense of God and spiritual things.[36] Unfortunately, her son did not altogether agree with her as to the things that have this effect, and he excluded many things from both young and old which he was permitted at home. Such is the background of Mrs. Wesley's "way of education."

The letter containing the way itself deserves to be quoted in full, so much light does it throw upon Wesley's own theories. It is written to him at his own request for the details of her method of raising children. A section of it on the management of the children's wills, comprising a tenth of the entire letter, he incorporates with slight alterations in the sermon on "Obedience to Parents," and uses ideas and wording from other parts of it freely in all of his sermons bearing on children. Attention has never been called, so far as has been discovered, to the fact that this quotation is taken from his mother's letter, Wesley introducing it simply as a "part of a letter on the subject, printed some years ago."[37] Many of his hearers and readers had undoubtedly seen it in his *Journal,* where he had printed it, and were therefore acquainted with its source. Their biographers, while calling attention to the son's debt in educational theory to his mother's discipline, and to the publicity he gave to her methods as illustrating his own theories, have nevertheless failed to show how great was his dependence upon the letter itself. The latest biographer of Mrs. Wesley holds the hypothesis that

[34] Stevens: *History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, Called Methodism,* I, 54, and note 33.

[35] From Mrs. Wesley's writings quoted in Clarke: *Susanna Wesley,* 94.

[36] *Ibid.,* 184.

[37] *Works,* II, 319.

possibly his desire to have his mother's theories in writing was due to "his own aspirations to family life."[38] Whatever may have been his reasons for desiring it, the reason for entering it in his *Journal* was, as he says, "for the benefit of those who are intrusted, as she was, with the care of a numerous family."[39] Her letter follows:

July 24, 1732.

DEAR SON,

According to your desire, I have collected the principle rules I observed in educating my family; which I now send you as they occurred to my mind, and you may (if you think they can be of use to any) dispose of them in what order you please.

The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth: as in dressing, undressing, changing their linen, &c. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradles awake, and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping; which at first was three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon; afterward two hours, till they needed none at all.

When turned a year old (and some before), they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly; by which means they escaped abundance of correction they might otherwise have had, and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked; and they were suffered to eat and drink (small beer) as much as they would, but not to call for anything. If they wanted aught, they used to whisper to the maid which attended them, who came and spake to me; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made eat such things as were provided for the family.

Mornings they had always spoon-meat; sometimes on nights. But whatever they had, they were never permitted to eat at those meals of more than one thing; and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in case of sick-

[38] Clarke: *Susanna Wesley*, 46.

[39] *Journal*, III, 34.

ness, which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask anything of the servants when they were at meat; if it was known they did, they were certainly beat, and the servants severely reprimanded.

At six, as soon as family prayers were over, they had their supper; at seven the maid washed them; and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight; at which time she left them in their several rooms awake—for there was no such thing allowed of in our house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them that, when any of them was ill, there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine; for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up. This I mention to show that a person may be taught to take anything, though it be never so much against his stomach.[40]

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing that must be done at once, and the sooner the better. For, by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinancy which is hardly ever after conquered: and never, without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world they pass for kind and indulgent whom I call cruel parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterward broken.[41] Nay, some are so stupidly fond as in sport to teach their children to do things which in a while after they have severely beaten them for doing. Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered; and this will be no hard matter to do if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reproved; but no willful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offense require.

I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual.

[40] Wesley's quotations from this letter in his sermon "On Obedience to Parents" begins at this point.

[41] Wesley does not quote the remainder of this paragraph.

But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children insures their after-wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident if we further consider that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; that, the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgences of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable; and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body, for ever.[42]

The children of this family were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and at bedtime constantly; to which, as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some collects; a short catechism, and some portions of Scripture, as their memories could bear.

They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they could well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak.

They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they

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[42] The following paragraph, which enforces the necessity of breaking the child's will, appears in Wesley's sermon as being also from his mother's letter. It apparently stood at this point in the letter in its original form. It is not found in the letter printed in the standard edition of Wesley's *Works*, nor in Curnock's standard edition of the *Journal*. With it Wesley's quotation concludes:

"This, therefore, I cannot but earnestly repeat, Break their wills betimes. Begin this great work before they can run alone, before they can speak plainly, or perhaps speak at all. Whatever pains it cost, conquer their stubbornness: break the will, if you would not damn the child. I conjure you not to neglect, not to delay this. Therefore, 1, Let a child from a year old, be taught to fear the rod and to cry softly. In order to this, 2, Let him have nothing he cries for; absolutely nothing, great or small; else you undo your own work. 3, At all events, from that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it: let none persuade you it is cruelty to do this: it is cruelty not to do it. Break his will now, and his soul will live, and he will probably bless you to all eternity."—*Works*, II, 320.

wanted. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for aught without saying, "Pray, give me such a thing;" and the servant was chid if she ever let them omit that word. Taking God's name in vain, cursing and swearing, profaneness, obscenity, rude, ill-bred names, were never heard among them. Nor were they ever permitted to call each other by their proper names without the addition of Brother or Sister.

None of them were taught to read till five years old, except Kezzy, in whose case I was overruled; and she was more years learning than any of the rest had been months. The way of teaching was this: the day before a child began to learn, the house was set in order, every one's work appointed them, and a charge given that none should come into the room from nine till twelve, or from two till five; which, you know, were our school hours. One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters; and each of them did in that time know all its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly; for which I then thought them very dull; but since I have observed how long many children are learning the horn-book, I have changed my opinion. But the reason why I thought them so then was because the rest learned so readily; and your brother Samuel, who was the first child I ever taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours. He was five years old on the 10th of February; the next day he began to learn; and, as soon as he knew the letters, began at the first chapter of Genesis. He was taught to spell the first verse, then to read it over and over, till he could read it off-hand without any hesitation; so on to the second, &c, till he took ten verses for a lesson, which he quickly did. Easter fell low that year; and by Whitsuntide he could read a chapter very well; for he read continually, and had such a prodigious memory that I cannot remember ever to have told him the same word twice.

What was yet stranger, any word he had learned in his lesson he knew wherever he saw it, either in his Bible or any other book; by which means he learned very soon to read an English author well.

The same method was observed with them all. As soon as they knew the letters, they were put first to spell, and read one line, then a verse; never leaving till perfect in their lesson, were it shorter or longer. So one or other continued reading at school-time, without any intermission; and before we left school each child read what he had learned that morning; and, ere we parted in the afternoon, what they had learned that day.

There was no such thing as loud talking or playing allowed of, but every one was kept close to their business, for the six hours of

school: and it is almost incredible what a child may be taught in a quarter of a year, by a vigorous application, if it have but a tolerable capacity and good health. Every one of these, Kezzy excepted, could read better in that time than the most of women can do as long as they live.

Rising out of their places, or going out of the room, was not permitted unless for good cause; and running into the yard, garden, or street, without leave was always esteemed a capital offense.

For some years we went on very well. Never were children in better order. Never were children better disposed to piety or in more subjection to their parents, till that fatal dispersion of them, after the fire, into several families. In these they were left at full liberty to converse with servants, which before they had always been restrained from; and to run abroad, and play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observation of the Sabbath, and got knowledge of several songs and bad things, which before they had no notion of. That civil behavior which made them admired when at home by all which saw them was, in great measure, lost; and a clownish accent and many rude ways were learned, which were not reformed without some difficulty.

When the house was rebuilt, and the children all brought home, we entered upon a strict reform; and then was begun the custom of singing psalms at beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of a general retirement at five o'clock was entered upon, when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the Psalms for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament; as, in the morning, they were directed to read the Psalms and a chapter in the Old; after which they went to their private prayers, before they got their breakfast or came into the family. And, I thank God, this custom is still preserved among us.

There were several by-laws observed among us, which slipped my memory, or else they had been inserted at their proper place; but I mention them here, because I think them useful.

1. It had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often led children into lying, till they get a custom of it, which they cannot leave. To prevent this a law was made, That whoever was charged with a fault, of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying, and would have done more, if one[43] in the family would have observed it. But he could not be prevailed on, and therefore was often imposed on by false

[43] *Journal*, III, 38, note 1, editorial: probably John Wesley's father.

colors and equivocations; which none would have used (except one),[44] had they been kindly dealt with. And some, in spite of all, would always speak truth plainly.

2. That no sinful action, as lying, pilfering, playing at church, or on the Lord's Day, disobedience, quarreling, &c., should ever pass unpunished.

3. That no child should ever be chid or beat twice for the same fault; and that, if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterward.

4. That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the cause.

5. That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted; and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.

6. That propriety be inviolably preserved, and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing or a pin; which they might not take from the owner without, much less against, his consent. This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children; and from the want of parents or governors doing it as they ought proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world.

7. That promises be strictly observed; and a gift once bestowed, and so the right passed away from the donor, be not resumed, but left to the disposal of him to whom it was given; unless it were conditional, and the condition of the obligation not performed.

8. That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time, that she was held to in reading. This rule also is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly is the very reason why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood.[45]

This letter reveals a discipline strict and persistent, but withal calm and unhurried. It shows that Mrs. Wesley governed by inflexible rules nearly every detail of her children's lives—their physical growth, their play, their study and work, and their piety and devotion. Wesley applies her rules more

[44] *Ibid.*, III, 38, note 2, editorial: May this have been Hetty?

[45] *Ibid.*, III, 34–39.

explicitly to the cure of children's diseases of nature. In many respects, as will be seen, he outdoes his mother in strictness.

II. Religious Education in the Home

(a) *Discipline*

Wesley, following his mother, conceives the training of children to be a twofold task. One branch of it is discipline, the other teaching. The disciplinary work is to correct the bias of nature by curing the diseases of nature. It is done chiefly in two ways, the one negative and the other positive. The growth of the diseases should not be stimulated; they should not be fed. Most parents are guilty of this, of adding fuel to the slumbering fires. But more is required than the withholding of everything that does this. There should follow positive methods to root out the diseases and to heal them. As soon as any of the evil roots are seen springing up through the fertile soil of the child's life, their advance should at once be checked and efforts made to uproot them. This is the disciplinary task. The religious instruction of children begins before this is accomplished, merging with it and supplementing it. The dawn of conscious religion should be coincident with the dawn of reason. The right time to begin instruction is "from the very time that reason dawns."[46] As soon as their understanding opens they should be told why they have been subjected to such a discipline, and then be led forth into the instruction of definite religious principles.[47] The combined task should be begun as early as possible. "Scripture, reason, and experience jointly testify that, inasmuch as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instructions can be, we should take all pains and care to counteract this corruption as early as possible."[48]

The most important work of discipline is to cure the disease of self-will. It is the foundation of religious education, because true religion is disposing of our life according to the will of God and not according to our own will. The only way to pre-

[46] *Works*, VII, 459.
[47] *Ibid.*, II, 320; VII, 458–460.
[48] *Ibid.*, VII, 459.

pare children to submit to God in their riper years is to subdue their will when they are young. And this is the province of the parent, for "the will of a parent is to a little child in the place of the will of God." Therefore, a wise parent will begin as soon as the child's will appears.[49] Although the understanding is to be informed by slow degrees through time, the will should be subjected at once, for it becomes more difficult the older the child grows. It should be done before he is two years old. It may be done later, but it will be with much more difficulty.[50] One of the most practical ways of accomplishing this is never to give the child what it cries for, but to teach it "to fear the rod and to cry softly."[51] To give it what it cries for, to humor it, is but to reward its will for self-assertion.[52] The task requires constant attention and unremitting firmness and resolution.[53] The severity of this rule has been held up for ridicule and generally misunderstood. What Wesley and his mother mean by it is not so much to break the will, for it is not yet set in an infant, but to prevent it from setting, from becoming habituated to indulge itself and the rest of one's nature. The word Mrs. Wesley prefers for "break" is "subdue" or "conquer." From her letter it is quite evident that the object in beginning correction early is in order to avoid the later necessity of using methods which would require "such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child."[54]

The disease of love of the world admits of treatment before the child is old enough for intellectual instruction, as does the disease of self-will. The pleasures of the senses, of the flesh and of the eye usually feed the love of the world. Therefore those things that gratify the outward senses should be given to children cautiously, if given at all. Before they are weaned their diet should be exclusively milk, "the natural food of children." After they are weaned they should be denied other kinds of food until their nature really demands it. Such glittering playthings and fancy clothes as catch their eye and fascinate

[49] *Ibid.*, II, 311–312.
[50] *Ibid.*, II, 321.
[51] *Ibid.*, II, 312, 320.
[52] *Ibid.*, II, 312.
[53] *Ibid.*, II, 312.
[54] *Journal*, III, 35.

them should also be withheld and the plainest things substituted.[55] Parents are not to adorn their children "with such gewgaws as other children wear" simply to look prettier.[56] Above all, whenever they are presented with unusual things, it is never to be as a reward for doing their duty. To do so would cause them to place too great value upon the merely pleasurable in life. They are to look to God for rewards. And this they should be taught to do as soon as they are old enough for instruction. "Habituate them to make God their end in all things; and inure them, in all they do, to aim at knowing, loving, and serving God."[57] So great a task is it to change the bias of nature from a love for the world to the love of God that all in the household need to cooperate in effecting it. Especially should servants and mothers-in-law be held in check. Servants are to be carefully advised never to work against the rules of the house by giving good things to children. Mothers-in-law are to be refused any share whatever in the management of children. "In four score years I have not met with one woman that knew how to manage grandchildren. My own mother, who governed her children so well, could never govern one grandchild. In every other point obey your mother. Give up your will to hers.

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[55] *Works*, II, 313–314.

[56] *Ibid.*, II, 265. It is interesting to compare Wesley with Horace Bushnell on this point. From dissimilar views of human nature and contrasted theological backgrounds they arrive at about the same conclusion regarding dress and the discipline of the body. Bushnell says: "The subject of dress, taken as related to religious character of youth, is one of transcendent importance. . . . The child is going to enlarge his consciousness, so as, in a sense, to take in his dress and be configured to it—inverting the common order of speech on the subject, when we talk of cutting the dress to the child; for it is equally true, in a different sense, that the child will be cut to his dress. . . . This taste for show, and finery, and flattery—what is it but the beginning of all irreligion? and what will the after life be but the continuance of this beginning? . . . The real question of dress is what shall be put upon this child, to make it feel most like a Christian—what will give him the finest feeling with the least of show and vanity? . . . Dress your child for Christ, if you will have him a Christian; bring everything, in the training, even of his body, to this one final aim, and it will be strange, if the Christian body you give him does not contain a Christian soul."—*Christian Nurture* (new edition), 248–251. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[57] *Ibid.*, II, 315.

But with regard to the management of your children, steadily keep the reins in your own hands."[58]

The disease of pride also admits of early treatment. It is ordinarily fed by parents who praise their children and suffer and encourage others to do the same before their very face. To praise them for other than religious worth is but teaching them to value what is unworthy, "what is dung and dross in the sight of God."[59] "They who teach children to love praise, train them up for the devil."[60] They should commend them "exceeding sparingly," and then only if with it they teach them that God alone is praiseworthy and the source of all that his children possess for which they are commended.[61] "To strike at the root of their pride, teach your children as soon as possibly you can, that they are fallen spirits; that they are fallen short of that glorious image of God, wherein they were first created; that they are not now, as they were once, incorruptible pictures of the God of glory; bearing the express likeness of the wise, the good, the holy Father of spirits, but more ignorant, more foolish, and more wicked than they can possibly conceive. Show them that, in pride, passion, and revenge, they are now like the devil. And that in foolish desires and groveling appetites, they are like the beasts of the field."[62] That is, they are to be taught that this is their condition apart from grace. Such self-knowledge is the essence of repentance, and leads naturally to a desire for salvation. This teaching harmonizes with Wesley's conviction that the doctrine of original sin and salvation through Christ alone "is the 'most proper' of all others 'to be instilled into a child.' "[63]

The disease of atheism, unlike the diseases just discussed, is fed not so much by what parents actually do for their children as by their neglect. Its treatment is, therefore, more through teaching than through discipline. Parents feed atheism by permitting days at a stretch to go by without once mentioning the name of God to their children or even alluding to

[58] *Ibid.*, II, 314.
[59] *Ibid.*, II, 313.
[60] Wesley: *Instructions for Children*, 135.
[61] *Works*, II, 313.
[62] *Ibid*, II, 313.
[63] *Ibid.*, V, 575–576.

him, while they talk to them on every other conceivable subject. As a consequence God and the unseen world seem remote and the visible world all that there is of the universe. Parents further aggravate the disease by assigning creation and natural events to chance and to secondary causes. God is not naturally connected with the experience of the children. The constructive effort to heal atheism will continually impress upon the mind of the child from the first dawn of reason that God is the creator and governor of the universe and the source and inspiration of everything good in it and in human beings. "Thus it is, we are to inculcate upon them, that God is all in all."[64]

Self-will, love of the world, pride, and atheism are the parent diseases of human nature, and are the first that should be attacked in the religious training of children. There are diseases which branch off from these, such as anger, falsehood, injustice, and unmercifulness. In describing them and in prescribing their cure Wesley is brief. Parents feed anger in their children in its worst form, namely revenge. "The silly mother says, 'What, hurt my child? Give me a blow for it.' What horrid work is this! Will not the old murderer teach them this lesson fast enough?"[65] Wise parents will teach just the opposite by setting the truth in their minds that vengeance belongs to God, that they are to return good, not evil, for evil. Parents arouse falsehood in children "by their unreasonable severity" which provokes dissimulation and lying, and by admiring anything ingenious and cunning in them. To cure it, teach them that the devil is the author of all lies, whether open or concealed, that they must "in little things and great, in jest or earnest, speak the very truth from their heart."[66] The tendency to injustice is increased when parents aid their children in cheating each other, or applaud them when they are not aiding them. From their infancy the seeds of justice should be sown in their hearts, to render every one his due in small things as in great.

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[64] *Ibid.*, II, 311.
[65] *Ibid.*, II, 315.
[66] *Ibid.*, II, 315.

Whenever children are permitted to be unkind to others or to hurt and give pain to anything that has life, such as birds, snakes, worms, or toads, their disease of unmercifulness is indulged. To cure it, teach them to "extend, in its measure, the rule of doing as they would be done by, to every animal whatsoever. Ye that are truly kind parents, in the morning, in the evening, and all the day beside, press upon all your children, 'to walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us'; to mind that one point, 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.'"[67]

Despite the severity Wesley recommends in breaking the will of children, he advised that generally, in so far as possible, the disciplinary work should be undertaken "by mildness, softness, and gentleness," "by advice, persuasion, and reproof."[68] Neither extreme severity nor extreme tenderness should be favored, for religion is often frustrated if punishment is used more than is needful or is entirely lacking. Needless severity is especially to be avoided, otherwise "it will not be strange if religion stink in the nostrils of those that were so educated."[69] To be sure, drastic methods of correction are to be employed, but only last, only after the trial and failure of all other methods. "And even then you should take the utmost care to avoid the very appearance of passion. Whatever is done should be done with mildness; nay, indeed, with kindness too. Otherwise your own spirit will suffer loss; and the child will reap little advantage."[70] All should be done "with kind severity."[71]

In these statements Wesley comes very close to the gentle spirit of his mother, whose rules were drawn up with the aim that they should forestall future correction. Much wonder has been aroused because the austerity of his methods stands in such sharp contrast to his fondness for children and the characteristic kindliness of his personal dealings with them. It is not necessary to cite more than an instance or two illustrating his kindly attitude toward children, for it is well known. Southey gives

[67] *Ibid.*, II, 315–316.
[68] *Ibid.*, II, 303; VII, 459.
[69] *Ibid.*, VII, 459.
[70] *Ibid.*, II, 303.
[71] *Ibid.*, VII, 459.

the oft-cited account of Wesley ordering his chaise every day, during one of his stays at Bath, a half-hour earlier than necessary, filling it with children and going to ride with them.[72] Wesley often speaks affectionately of children, remarks about their lovely faces, and is unable to believe that the wrath of God is abiding upon them.[73] His kindliness was especially marked in the later years of his life, as his *Journal* shows. He records with pleasure the affection which children gave him.[74] One day, before the preaching service at Oldham, he was surprised by the way they flocked about him and closed in on him, not content to leave him until he had shaken each of them by the hand. He speaks of them as "such children as I never saw till now."[75] He loved children, but believed that the training of Christians should be strenuous and not effeminate, because of the malignant nature of the diseases that encumber them. In fact, he argued that the belief in the evil nature of folk does not exclude love for them, even though they should be reared with severity. "To describe human nature as deeply fallen, as far removed from both virtue and wisdom, does not argue that we despise it. We know by Scripture, as well as by sad experience, that men are unspeakably foolish and wicked. And such the Son of God knew them to be when he laid down his life for them. But this did not hinder him from loving them, no more than it does any of the children of God."[76] If his advice to the Methodist people regarding clothes, riches, and luxuries in general, be recalled, it will be seen that he did not discriminate against children. The business of redemption is serious, and all mankind, young or old, demand serious treatment. A comparison with the practice of the Port-Royalists may make Wesley's position clearer. The bed-rock of the Port-Royal discipline and teaching was love for the pupil. But this did not exclude the employment of stringent methods in educating them. On the contrary, the gen-

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[72] *A New History of Methodism*, I, 220.
[73] *Works*, VI, 670; VII, 48, 49, 195; *Journal*, V, 465.
[74] *Journal*, VI, 73, 329.
[75] *Ibid.*, VI, 347.
[76] *Works*, V, 585.

eral tenor of their program was a strict regulation of the conduct of their children and of everything that touched them. In them severity and devotion combined.[77] In both Wesley and the Port-Royalists the guiding motive was the welfare of the souls in their keeping.

(b) *Instruction*

The tasks of discipline and instruction, as has been indicated already, supplement each other in the religious education of children. Yet, practically, the work of each is distinct. Wesley set forth as definite rules for teaching as he did for the work of discipline. His sermon "On Family Religion" sets forth his method of teaching as explicitly as his sermon "On the Education of Children" sets forth his manner of discipline. In it he gives parents the guiding principle of teaching in the compact sentence, "You should particularly endeavor to instruct your children, early, plainly, frequently, and patiently."[78] He then develops each head separately.

"Instruct them early." As soon as they are able to walk or talk their understanding opens and their reason dawns, and they are capable of instruction. Truth shines upon the mind far earlier than is generally supposed. And from the start such matter should be taught the child as will turn its soul toward good things. "I know no cause why a parent should not just then begin to speak of the best things, the things of God," as well as of trifling or bad things.[79]

"Speak to them plainly"—otherwise speaking to them early will be of no avail. To draw and fix the attention of children is one of the greatest difficulties in speaking to them.[80] Therefore, "use such words as little children may understand, just as they use themselves. Carefully observe the few ideas which they have already, and endeavor to graft what you say upon them."[81] For example, in speaking about God, to use the words

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[77] Barnard: *The Little Schools of Port-Royal*, 72–73, 82, 90.
[78] *Works*, II, 304.
[79] *Ibid.*, II, 304.
[80] *Ibid.*, VI, 464.
[81] *Ibid.*, II, 304.

of the Assembly's Catechism that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, is to employ terms beyond the capacity of little children.[82] Even the Catechism of the Established Church is too long and too hard for children of six or seven years of age.[83] In speaking of God, interest children first in the sun and its warmth and its work in causing flowers and grass and trees to grow. Then point to God as the power behind the sun causing it to shine and giving it its warmth. From that it is an easy step to speak of the extent of his power and love, even to the smallest thing such as a child. "He loves you: he loves to do you good. He loves to make you happy. Should not you then love *him?* You love *me,* because I love you and do you good. But it is God that makes me love you. Therefore you should love him. And he will teach you how to love him."[84] The same method of procedure in dealing with children is advised in the sermon from the text, "There is one God."[85] Wesley took occasion in his *Life of Fletcher* to illustrate his meaning. One day Fletcher was speaking to a group of children and with great difficulty commanding their attention, when a robin flew into the house, diverting them still further. Whereupon with infinite tact he took the robin as his text and spoke to them successfully "on the harmlessness of that little creature, and the tender care of its Creator."[86] Comenius seems to be reflected in Wesley's advice to interest children in things and to speak to them on their own level. And there is reason to believe he practiced it himself. On one occasion, to illustrate his point to several clergymen and friends to whom he had been remarking upon the importance of using simple and plain words when speaking to children, he engaged to preach to a group of them on set date and to use no word of over two syllables. On the day fixed he preached to a group of five hundred and fifty Methodist Sunday-school children and literally fulfilled his pledge. The sermon that he used was the one he was fond of, which has already been mentioned several times, from the text,

[82] *Ibid.*, II, 430–431.
[83] *Ibid.*, VII, 170.
[84] *Ibid.*, II, 304–305.
[85] *Ibid.*, II, 431.
[86] *Ibid.*, VI, 464.

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: and I will teach you the fear of the Lord."[87]

"Teach them not only early and plainly, but *frequently* too."[88] Constant repetition is necessary if results are to be produced. Something about God might well be said many times in the day, instead of talking exclusively about other matters and postponing the most important knowledge till children are older.[89] The soul should be fed no less often than the body. "If you find this a tiresome task, there is certainly something wrong in your own mind. You do not love them enough; or you do not love him, who is your Father and their Father."[90] It is particularly urgent to teach children frequently about God because from the time they enter the world "they are surrounded with idols," innumerable rivals and substitutes of true religion. Such idols are the excitants of the senses, of the imagination, and the pride of life, which stimulate the love of the world, promising a happiness they cannot give. To omit from the program of instruction true religion, the only source of true happiness, is to suggest that it has no place in bringing happiness on earth, that the happiness it gives is deferred for the next world. It is important to press upon children continually that happiness is dependent upon God.[91] Therefore, teach them frequently.

And, finally, if teaching is to bear any fruit, teach patiently.[92] By this is meant teach with perseverance, earnestly and diligently. "You must tell them the same thing ten times over, or you do nothing."[93] You must lay line upon line and precept upon precept with all diligence.[94] Some children are inconceivably dull, others so giddy and perverse that if the teacher followed his own inclination he would give up in despair. "I remember to have heard my father asking my mother, 'How could you have the patience to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?' She answered, 'Why, if I had told him

[87] *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, IV, 119–120; *Journal*, VII, 155, note 2.

[88] *Works*, II, 305.

[89] *Ibid.*, II, 305.

[90] *Ibid.*, II, 305.

[91] *Ibid.*, II, 431.

[92] *Ibid.*, II, 305.

[93] *Ibid.*, VII, 91.

[94] *Ibid.*, VII, 459.

but nineteen times, I should have lost all my labor.' What patience indeed, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this!"[95] And even if after all patience no fruit is in evidence at once, it is possible that later the seeds will result in a rewarding harvest, especially if God is urgently called upon in prayer. He it is that must open their understanding—"he alone can apply your words to their hearts: without which all your labor will be in vain." So continually lift up your heart to him that there may be no delay in learning.[96]

(c) *The Children's Texts*

In order to assist parents, schoolmasters, and preachers in their teaching, Wesley prepared several tracts to be used as the basis of instruction. Of these the *Lessons for Children* and the *Instructions for Children* are the most important. Each has a preface that so illuminates Wesley's method of instilling religion into children and summarizes what has just been said that they are inserted at this point. A description of the books themselves will be given later. The preface to the *Lessons* is as follows:

To All Parents and Schoolmasters

1. I have endeavored in the following lessons to select the plainest and the most useful portions of Scripture; such as a Christian may the most easily understand, and such as it most concerns him to know. These are set down in the same order, and (generally) the same words, wherein they are delivered by the Spirit of God. Where an expression is less easy to be understood, I have subjoined a word or two by way of explication; but taking care not to detain you from your great work, with Comments longer than the Text.

2. I cannot but earnestly entreat you, to take good heed, how you teach these deep things of God. Beware of that common, but accursed, way of making children parrots, instead of Christians. Labor that, as far as is possible, they may understand every single sentence which they read. Therefore, do not make haste. Regard not *how much,* but *how well,* to how good purpose, they read. Turn each sentence every way, propose it in every light, and question them

[95] *Minutes*, I, 68.
[96] *Works*, II, 305.

continually on every point; if by any means, they may not only *read,* but *inwardly digest* the words of eternal life.

3. Meantime you will not fail, with all diligence to commend both yourselves and your little ones to Him, without whom you well know neither is he that planteth, anything, nor he that watereth. You are sensible, He alone giveth the increase. May He both minister bread for your own food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.[97]

The following is the preface to the *Instructions:*

To All Parents and Schoolmasters

1. I have laid before you in the following tract the true principles of the Christian education of children. These should, in all reason, be instilled into them as soon as ever they can distinguish good from evil. If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, then it is certainly the very first thing they should learn. And why may they not be taught the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of letters at the same time?

2. A great part of what follows is translated from the French; only it is here cast into another form, and divided into sentences, that it may be the more easily understood either by the teacher or the learners. And although the great truths herein contained are more immediately addressed to children, yet are they worthy the deepest consideration both of the oldest and the wisest men.

3. Let them be deeply engraven in your own hearts, and you will spare no pains in teaching them to others. Above all, let them not read or say one line without understanding and minding what they say. Try them over and over; stop them short, almost in every sentence; and ask them, "What was it you said last? Read it again: what do you mean by that?" So that, if it be possible, they may pass by nothing, till it has taken some hold upon them. By this means they will learn to *think* as they learn to *read;* they will grow wiser and better every day. And you will have the comfort of observing that by the same steps they advance in the knowledge of these poor elements they will also grow in grace, in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.[98]

Wesley prepared the *Lessons* in order to guide his people to the most useful portions of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. He did not make a similar abridgment of the New

[97] Wesley, *Lessons for Children,* 3, 4.

[98] *Works,* VII, 523.

Testament because he felt that all of it should be read.[99] Every book of the Old Testament is represented in the *Lessons* except Ruth, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and the Minor Prophets. One wonders why Wesley did not substitute Ruth for Esther, and why he did not include some portions, even though brief, of Amos, Hosea, and Malachi. One also wonders why he did not present the story of Jonah in summarized form. A list showing the topics and the sections of Scripture from which his selections are taken is included in the Appendix inasmuch as it has never before been compiled.

Wesley gave the *Instructions for Children* chief place among the textbooks for children in the home. He directed the preachers' assistants to see that every Methodist society was well supplied with it, so that every home could possess a copy.[100] He believed it contained "the best matter that we can possibly teach" children, and claimed never to have "seen anything comparable to them, either for depth of sense, or plainness of language."[101] Although it is not an original work of Wesley's, yet it is an accurate presentation of his theology.[102] It is in such form as children can readily understand. The sentences are short and compact, occupying, for the most part, one or two lines each. The tone throughout is dogmatic and almost imperative. It is divided into six sections and contains in all fifty-eight lessons. Section one is a catechism of twelve lessons on God, the creation and fall of man, the redemption of man, the means of grace, and hell and heaven.[103] This is the catechism which Wesley thought more proper for children than the Assembly's Catechism. Section two deals more specifically with the nature "Of God, and of the Soul of Man," expanding the teaching of the catechism on these topics.[104] Section three is entitled "How

[99] *Minutes*, I, 17.

[100] *Works*, V, 226.

[101] *Ibid.*, VI, 467, note 2; VII, 94.

[102] *The Instructions for Children* is chiefly a translation from the French work of Abbé Fleury and M. Pierre Poiret entitled, *Les Principes solides de la religion et de la vie Chrétienne appliqués à l' éducation des enfants.* See Green, *Bibliography*, Nos. 62, 117, 118, 174.

[103] Wesley, *Instructions for Children*, 123–129. [104] *Ibid.*, 129–133.

to Regulate Our Desires."[105] The desire of the soul is defined as "the heart or the will." This section inculcates the lesson of giving up self-will to the will of God and desiring only those things that please him. It teaches the nature of prayer and sets down the desires that should be voiced every time prayer is offered, and gives a form of prayer as a guide. It concludes with the Lord's Prayer, defining it as "the best prayer in the world." Section four is on "How to Regulate Our Understanding."[106] It teaches that the understanding is "made for truth, that is, for God himself, for his word and his works," that atheism is the lot of mankind since the Fall, that only through the eyes of the soul, which God alone can open, can anything be known either of God or the things of God. It sets forth regulations concerning one's belief, and gives the Apostles' Creed as the best summary of belief. Section five teaches "How to Regulate Our Joy."[107] Man's joy should rest not in the world and in the things of the world, but in God, in the knowledge of his great attributes, and in obedience to him. Fondness for pretty things and for money will be destroyed in one who makes God his chief joy. He will also put away lying, pride, and revenge, for they lead to separation from God. But joy should be mixed with fear, else "it will cover the greatness of our corruption, and so hinder us from seeking to be cured of it." The last section is on "How to Regulate Our Practice."[108] "The true spirit of the Christian life and practice" is opposite to the spirit of the world and of corrupt nature. It leads to a life of self-denial and works of charity for mankind in humility and penitence, without desire for reward or self-pleasing. Eating and drinking especially should be done only in such manner as will advance the glory of God. "Suffer me not, O Lord, to eat and drink like a brute beast, only by a brutal appetite: much less do thou suffer me to follow herein the motions of my corrupt nature." The Ten Commandments, together with Christ's two command-

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[105] *Ibid.*, 133–143.
[106] *Ibid.*, 143–150.
[107] *Ibid.*, 150–159
[108] *Ibid.*, 159–172.

ments of love to God and neighbor, are given as the regulative guide to practice, and are followed by brief expositions of their meaning. The *Instructions* concludes with an exhortation to parents to follow its teachings. "Happy are those who despising the rules of the diabolical and antichristian world, train up the precious souls of their children wholly by the rules of Jesus Christ."

The *Tokens for Children* is another text recommended by Wesley to be used in teaching children, although it is mentioned but once in his writings. The Conference of 1744 advised it as a lesson book for the preachers to use along with the *Instructions.*[109] According to Green's *Bibliography* of Wesley's works, it consists of ten carefully abridged examples of the conversion, holy living, and dying of young children, from *A Token for Children,* by the Rev. James Janeway.[110] Janeway's work contains the records of thirteen pious children between the ages of two and thirteen. Their religious experiences resemble somewhat the experiences of the pious children which Wesley records in his *Journal.* Janeway's accounts, however, are written in greater detail and are more somber in character. The Preface addressed to the children is especially frightful in its depiction of the consequences to visit those who die unconverted.[111] One is led to think that Wesley decided for judicious reasons to relinquish his edition of this work some time after the first Conference in favor of the *Instructions.* He mentions the *Lessons* and *Instructions* again and again, but does not refer to the *Tokens* after this Conference of 1744.

Wesley considered education in prayer to be a part of the religious training of children, as is seen from the *Instructions.* Children should be brought up to use this means of grace as well as the Scriptures. They should be led to pray in private as well as to participate in family worship. Thus, Wesley attributes the sudden end of a promising revival among the Kingswood boys "chiefly to their total neglect of private prayer.

[109] *Minutes,* I, 12.
[110] Green, *Bibliography,* No. 124.
[111] Janeway, *A Token for Children,* 9, 10.

Without this, all the other means which they enjoyed could profit them nothing."[112] But those who educate children in prayer should discriminate and take into account the ages of the children and grade their prayers according to their spiritual experience. "Although there may be some use in teaching very young children to 'say their prayers daily'; yet I judge it to be utterly impossible to teach any to 'practice prayer' till they are awakened. For what is prayer but the desire of the soul expressed in words to God, either inwardly or outwardly? How, then, will you teach them to express a desire who feel no desire at all?"[113] But as soon as the child has become a believer, even though but a beginner, he should be stimulated to pray. To guide children in this aspect of their religious life Wesley prepared forms of prayer to be used every morning and evening in the week, as he did for the use of adults and families.[114] To these he added "A Prayer for Relations, Friends, &c., to be used after Morning and Evening Prayer," and two others, "Grace before Meat" and "After Meals." He prefaced them in these words:

> My dear Child—A lover of your soul has here drawn up a few prayers, in order to assist you in that great duty. Be sure that you do not omit, at least morning and evening, to present yourself upon your knees before God. You have mercies to pray for, and blessings to praise God for. But take care that you do not mock God, drawing near with your lips, while your heart is far from him. God sees you, and knows your thoughts; therefore, see that you not only speak with your lips, but pray with your heart. And that you may not ask in vain, see that you forsake sin, and make it your endeavor to do what God has shown you ought; because God says, "The prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord." Ask, then, of God for the blessings you want, in the name, and for the sake, of Jesus Christ; and God will hear and answer you, and do more for you than you can either ask or think.[115]

These prayers voice the children's needs and stimulate higher aspirations. There is nothing puerile about them. If anything, they are, in form and content, more appropriate for

[112] *Journal*, V, 484.
[113] *Works*, VII, 95.
[114] *Ibid.*, VI, 417–426.
[115] *Ibid.*, 417.

children of riper years than for the youngest, for those "awakened," to use Wesley's word. The style of the prayers is biblical, and many phrases are borrowed from the Scriptures, especially from the Psalms. The prayer for Monday evening is an adaptation of the general confession from the Book of Common Prayer.[116] The chief attitudes which Wesley desired to arouse through the prayers are reverence for God, due sense of the corruption of human nature, receptivity to spiritual things, a desire to become more spiritual, and a deep sincerity. Some of the recurring petitions are for pardon, for strength against temptation, for God's blessing on the child's studies, for the opening of his understanding, and for his advancement in the means of grace. The characteristic points in Wesley's theology are frequently brought out. They appear in such petitions as, "Give me, O Lord, that highest learning, to know thee; and that best wisdom, to know myself;[117] "O Lord, do thou teach me the meaning of the new birth, that I, a child of wrath, may become a child of grace. Lord, take away the veil from my heart, that I may know my sinful nature."[118] The "Prayer for Relations, Friends, &c.," makes provision for the social element in prayer. Through it the child asks God's blessing upon his parents, teachers, friends, superiors, and enemies, his mercy upon the afflicted and the suffering, and the coming of the knowledge and love of God upon all mankind.[119] Each of the morning and evening prayers concludes with the Lord's Prayer.

Another provision that Wesley made for the spiritual and intellectual guidance of children was his publication in 1790 of forty-four hymns selected from Charles Wesley's *Hymns for Children and Others of Riper Years,* which he issued as *Hymns for Children.* According to Green, more than half of the hymns are taken from the section in his brother's work entitled *Hymns for the Youngest,* "and amongst these are some of Charles Wesley's sweetest verses."[120] The Preface Wesley wrote to his selection is as follows:

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[116] *Ibid.*, VI, 419–420.
[117] *Ibid.*, VI, 422.
[118] *Ibid.*, VI, 423.
[119] *Ibid.*, VI, 426.
[120] Green, *Bibliography*, No. 414.

There are two ways of writing or speaking to children; the one is, to let ourselves down to them; the other, to lift them up to us. Doctor Watts has wrote in the former way, and has succeeded admirably well, speaking to children as children, and leaving them as he found them. The following hymns are written on the other plan: they contain strong and manly sense, yet expressed in such plain and easy language as even children may understand. But when they do understand them, they will be children no longer, only in years and stature.[121]

This Preface, like the prefaces to the *Lessons* and the *Instructions,* indicates Wesley's conviction that teaching should aim not simply to impart information but to develop the power of the pupil to think, and that it should lead him to the experimental knowledge of religion. As this collection of hymns was one of Wesley's last publications, it shows that his solicitude for the welfare of children was not abated even in his extreme old age.

III. Religious Education in the Methodist Societies

The Methodist preachers were detailed by Wesley to cooperate with parents in the training of children. He reminded them that preaching once or twice a week was the least part of their office,[122] that not even preaching as frequently as once or twice a day would excuse them from other duties.[123] "What avails public *preaching alone,* though we could preach like angels?"[124] The faithful shepherd of souls will be busy with the cure and the care of the parish. "To 'seek and save that which is lost;' to bring souls from Satan to God; to instruct the ignorant; to reclaim the wicked; to convince the gainsayer; to direct their feet into the way of peace, and then keep them therein; to follow them step by step, lest they turn out of the way, and advise them in their doubts and temptations; to lift up them that fall; to refresh them that are faint; and to comfort the weak-hearted; to administer various helps, as the variety of occasions require, according to their several necessities—these are parts of our office; all this we have undertaken at the peril

[121] *Ibid.*
[122] *Works,* V, 126.
[123] *Minutes,* I, 122.
[124] *Ibid.,* I, 62; *Works,* V, 213.

of our own soul."[125] Among other things, then, the preacher must be an instructor of religion. It is noteworthy that the design of the first Methodist Conference, held in 1744 at the Foundery, which in many ways contained the germ-cell of the later development of Methodism, should have been to consider: "1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. And, 3. What to do? i.e., how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice."[126]

In general, there are three points in Wesley's outline of the teaching work of the ministry as it relates to children. In the first place, the preacher is to revive and guide family worship. He can best do this by using as a pattern the method of family prayer Philip Henry (1631-1696) employed in his own home and encouraged among his parishioners. According to his son and biographer, Matthew Henry, the famous commentator, Philip Henry made a business of family prayer. One of his famous utterances is, "We are that really which we are relatively. It is not so much what we are at church, as what we are in our families. Those do well that pray morning and evening in their families; those do better that pray and read the Scriptures; but those do best of all that pray, and read, and sing psalms: and Christians should covet earnestly the best gifts."[127] He had a set order of service in his morning and evening family worship. A short prayer was offered at the opening, then a psalm sung, and the Scriptures read and expounded. This done, the children were required to give some account of what they had heard, whereupon the meaning of it was further fixed in their minds by their parents. A longer prayer followed. The worship concluded with a benediction or the doxology. Before the family separated the children would ask a blessing of their parents, which was invariably given. On Thursday evenings

[125] *Works*, V, 126.

[126] *Minutes*, I, 4; *Works*, V, 194.

[127] Henry, *Life of Philip Henry*, 43. According to the *Minutes* of the Conference of 1765, Wesley directed the preachers to "read publickly that part of Mr. Philip Henry's Life" which contained his method of family prayer.—*Minutes*, I, 51. It is impossible to say whether the reference is to the *Life* by Matthew Henry or not. Wesley was acquainted with his commentaries and may have known this work.

special pains were taken to catechize the children. On Saturday evenings they were called upon to recite what they had learned during the week.[128] As far as can be ascertained, this is Philip Henry's method of family prayer which Wesley instructed his preachers to urge the Methodists to adopt.[129] It is evident that the children hold a central place in it.

In the second place, the preacher himself is to teach the children in the home. One of the stated questions Wesley asked those seeking admittance into the Methodist Conference was, "Will you diligently and earnestly instruct the children, and visit from house to house?"[130] This question, it may be remarked, is still asked of all candidates for full membership in any Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[131] Wesley felt that there is no better method for instructing from house to house than that set forth by Richard Baxter in his *Gildas Salvianus: the Reformed Pastor,* and urged that his preachers adopt it.[132] He accordingly gave them a summary of it, adding special references to the instruction of children. Every preacher should make a systematic visitation of the homes represented in his society, instructing both young and old, using as a text the *Instructions for Children.* The particular method suggested in doing this is to take each person apart by himself and deal closely with his condition and greatest spiritual need, catechizing him, instructing him according to his capacity in the principles of the Christian religion, and, if he is unconverted, impressing him with a sense of his condition and endeavoring to win him to an acceptance of Christ. "Before you leave them, engage the head of each family, to call all his family every Sunday, before they go to bed, and hear what they can rehearse, and so continue till they have learned all *The Instructions* perfectly. And afterward take care that they do not forget what they have learned." "The sum is: Go into every house in course, and

[128] *Ibid.*, 43–53.

[129] *Minutes*, I, 51, 68; *Works*, V, 223.

[130] *Ibid.*, I, 52.

[131] *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1920, 133.

[132] *Minutes*, I, 62–67, 68; *Works*, V, 213–217, 223. See *The Practical Works of The Rev. Richard Baxter*, XIV, Chapters 6 and 7.

teach *every one* therein, young and old; if they belong to us, to be Christians inwardly and outwardly."[133]

The third duty of the preacher with respect to the religious education of children is to form societies for them within the larger society and meet them regularly. The epoch-making Conference of 1744 did not leave the children out of account but made provision for their oversight. The question was asked: "Might not the children in every place be formed into a little society?" To this the answer was given: "Let the preachers try, by meeting them together, and giving them suitable exhortations. At each meeting, we may first set them a lesson in the *Instructions* or *Tokens for Children.* 2. Hear them repeat it. 3. Explain it to them in an easy, familiar manner. 4. Often ask, 'What have I been saying?' And strive to fasten it on their hearts."[134] The Conference of 1766 directed the preachers to spend an hour twice a week with the children in every society where there are ten of them. To the objection that "I have no gift for this," the answer was given, "Gift or no gift, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher."[135] Again, the Conference of 1768, legislating to meet conditions in the large towns where parish work was heavier than elsewhere, gave special instructions to the preachers to meet the children an hour a week, "whether you like it or not."[136] By these successive enactments Wesley made provision for the membership of the children in the societies and for their religious instruction. Nothing much besides this can be said with respect to the relation of the children to the societies. Apparently, they joined them as members on trial and as members in full on the same terms with their elders.[137]

Wesley expected that the Methodist preachers who entered his service should give themselves to diligent study to meet the requirements of their teaching office more efficiently. He held

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[133] *Ibid.*, I, 68; *Works*, V, 223.
[134] *Minutes*, I, 12.
[135] *Ibid.*, I, 68.
[136] *Ibid.*, I, 81.
[137] *Journal*, II, 211 (diary); V, 525; VI, 515, note 3.

a lofty ideal for all clergymen, as his "Address to the Clergy" shows. They should have special gifts of grace, of personality, and of intellect.[138] They should have "all the courtesy of a gentleman, joined with the correctness of a scholar."[139] It was a current opinion that one who was too ignorant for any other profession could become a minister. In answer to this Wesley said, "A blockhead can never 'do well enough for a parson.' "[140] "Oh, how can these who themselves know nothing aright, impart knowledge to others? how instruct them in all the variety of duty, to God, their neighbor, and themselves? How will they guide them through all the mazes of error, through all the entanglements of sin and temptation? How will they apprize them of the devices of Satan, and guard them against all the wisdom of the world?" The Methodist preachers were to devote their mornings to study—"from six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast)."[141] They were to follow the courses of study, including the classics, which Wesley prescribed for them.[142] If they had no taste for reading and could not "contract a taste for it by use," they were to return to their trades.[143] So desirous was Wesley of having a trained leadership that he planned for many years to "have a seminary for laborers," and when the New Kingswood School was built he hoped that some of his preachers might receive preliminary training there,[144] and designed that the children trained there should be "fit as to all acquired qualifications for the work of the ministry."[145]

IV. Religious Education in the Schools

Insight into the application of Wesley's educational principles to schools, as has already been stated, is gained chiefly

[138] *Works*, VI, 217–231.
[139] *Ibid.*, 220.
[140] *Ibid.*, 223.
[141] *Minutes*, I, 16; *Works*, V, 222.
[142] *Publications of the Wesley Historical Society*, No. 1, 28–29.
[143] *Minutes*, I, 67; *Works*, V, 223.
[144] Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, 218, 262, 315.
[145] *Publications of the Wesley Historical Society*, No. 1, 54.

from a study of the charity school at the Foundery Society and the boarding school at Kingswood. References in Wesley's writings to the Foundery School, scant though they are, lead one to the conclusion that the underlying theories upon which it was conducted closely resemble the principles governing the school at Kingswood. The Foundery School was an elementary day school, and could not from the nature of the case admit of rules covering such various phases of life as the boarding school of higher education at Kingswood. It aimed, however, to keep strict control of its pupils during school hours, and to give them sound religious training as well as to teach them the elements of learning. School hours were from six to twelve, and from one to five. The children were prohibited from speaking in school except to the masters. They were permitted no play days. They were obliged to attend the morning sermon. Any child that was absent from the school two days in one week or failed to observe the rules was expelled. Two stewards were appointed to attend to the administration of the school, and among their duties was the spiritual oversight of the pupils. They met the children twice a week to pray with them and exhort them, and to inquire into their progress in grace and their observance of the rules of the school. They also consulted once a week with the parents and exhorted them to train their children in the ways of the school. Some time before 1772 the school was discontinued.[146]

It will be remembered that a dearth of the right sort of schools for boys led Wesley to found the Kingswood School for the higher education of Methodist children. He intended that it should overcome the "palpable blemishes" of the general run of boarding schools then in existence. He disapproved of the current schools chiefly on four grounds. In the first place, most of them are situated in large towns. The attention of the children is diverted from the ends of learning every time they go abroad, and they come into promiscuous contact with large numbers of town children, who by example and advice retard their learning and make havoc of their religion. Secondly,

[146] *Works*, V, 188–189.

these schools are not sufficiently careful in the selection of pupils, receiving all who apply, "however corrupted already, perhaps in principle (though that is not quite so frequent) as well as practice." Children are not likely to retain their religion, if they have any, with such companionship. In the third place, "in many schools, the masters have no more religion than the scholars," and are not instilled in the principles of Christianity nor interested in its practice. "Consequently, they are nothing concerned, whether their scholars are Papists or Protestants, Turks or Christians: they look upon this as no part of their business; they take no thought about it." Lastly, the schools of the day are defective in instruction. They rarely teach arithmetic, writing, geography, and "chronology"; they teach neither Greek nor Latin thoroughly; and "there are some schools of note wherein no Hebrew at all is taught." The classics in use are imperfect in style and sense, and obscene and profane in content. Nor are they read in the order of their difficulty, the easiest often read last and the most difficult first.[147]

Wesley in founding his school at Kingswood aimed to avoid these outstanding defects. He intended that the children educated there should receive thorough intellectual education and sound religious training. With this in mind he guided the curriculum and the government of the school.

The Kingswood curriculum was encyclopedic, and combined classical and religious instruction to a remarkable degree. It was designed to include "every branch of useful learning, from the very alphabet."[148] According to the *Short Account of the School in Kingswood, Near Bristol,* published in 1768, the scholars were to be taught "reading, writing, arithmetic, English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics, geometry, algebra, physics, music."[149] In the *Plain Account of Kingswood School,* published in 1781, "natural philosophy, and metaphysics" are added to these.[150]

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[147] *Ibid.*, VII, 336–337.

[148] *Publications of the Wesley Historical Society*, No. 1, 54.

[149] *Works*, VII, 332.

[150] *Ibid.*, 340.

And it is quite possible that there were other subjects.[151] The curriculum printed in the short account shows that religion was given a large place in the school. The texts from which reading was taught in all eight classes were moral and religious books. It was probably intended that religion should be inculcated, in part at least, indirectly. The following books were used in reading: the *Instructions for Children, Lessons for Children, The Manners of the Ancient Christians* (extracted from Fleury), Cave's *Primitive Christianity, The Pilgrim's Progress, The Life of Mr. Haliburton, The Life of Mr. De Renty,* Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call.* Other moral and religious texts employed are *Corderii Colloquia Selecta, Historia Selectae,* Castellio's *Kempis, Cornelius Nepos, Select Dialogues of Erasmus, Moral and Sacred Poems,* "Genesis," "The Gospels," and "The Epistles of St. John."[152]

Wesley himself wrote the grammars and the textbook in logic.[153] He likewise edited all the other books, expurgating them carefully, "that nothing immodest or profane be found in any of our authors. . . . But this is not all. We take care that our books be not only inoffensive but useful too; that they contain as much strong, sterling sense, and as much genuine morality, as possible; yea, and Christian morality. For what good reason can be assigned why we should leave this out of account? Why should not even children be taught, so far as they are capable, the oracles of God?"[154] Thus, in so far as possible, Wesley made the secular books contribute to the religious purpose of the school. Where this was impossible, he was careful that none of them worked counter to it.

The conditions of admission into the school were stringent. Not every child that applied was to be admitted, "but, if possible, such as had some thoughts of God, and some desire of saving their souls; and such whose parents desired they should not be almost, but altogether, Christians."[155] Parents were therefore informed of this condition and requested to read the rules of the

[151] *History of the Kingswood School,* by *Three Old Boys,* 29.
[152] *Works,* VII, 332–333.
[153] *Ibid.,* 609–745.
[154] *Ibid.,* 340.
[155] *Ibid.,* 339.

school before they sent their children to it, being assured that neither "favor or affection" would be shown to any nor exceptions made. They were further obliged to agree that their children would observe all the rules, and that they would not take them from the school, even for a day, until they were ready to take them once for all. Wesley gives as his reason for this rule that if children are permitted to go back and forth between the school and their homes, they would "unlearn" in a short time what it takes a long time to learn, and would "contract a prejudice to exact discipline."[156] "The children, therefore, of tender parents, so called (who are indeed offering up their sons and daughters unto devils), have no business here."[157]

Wesley enacted regulations concerning the age and number of boys taught in the school. His practice seemed to vary with regard to this from time to time. According to the *Minutes* of the Conference of 1744, it was designed to admit boys only between the ages of six and ten.[158] According to Wesley's *Short Account* of the school, those as old as twelve could enter.[159] But in 1770 Wesley wrote to the headmaster, Joseph Benson, "I will take none that is above nine years old." It seems, however, that this was only a temporary arrangement of Wesley's, for at the time of his writing there was "a gracious visitation" of the Spirit in the school and he wished to be particularly careful to guard the children from corruption.[160] The settled policy of the school was undoubtedly to receive children between the years of six and twelve. The ground for setting the age limit at twelve was that "a child could not well before that age be rooted either in bad habits or ill principles."[161]

Not only was admittance into the school to be limited to boys of restricted ages, but also the size of the group enrolled at any one time was to be strictly controlled. The school was built to accommodate fifty children, besides masters and serv-

[156] *Ibid.*
[157] *Ibid.*, 333.
[158] *Publications of the Wesley Historical Society*, No. I, 54.
[159] *Works*, VII, 332.
[160] *Ibid.*, 68.
[161] *Ibid.*, VII, 339.

ants.[162] The enrollment was ordinarily allowed to reach that number. Wesley stated, however, on one occasion that he desired only thirty.[163] He was against larger numbers because they added to the burdens of the masters and increased the difficulty of proper control. "It is scarce possible to keep them in so exact order as we might do a smaller number."[164]

Wesley chose masters for the school with utmost care. Twice he makes reference to searching "the three kingdoms" for such as would meet the high qualifications he held for that office.[165] They must be men not only of intellectual attainments but also of genuine piety, utterly devoted to God, and patterns of holiness to the children.[166] They must seek "nothing on earth, neither pleasure, nor ease, nor profit, nor the praise of men; but simply to glorify God, with their bodies and spirits, in the best manner they were capable of."[167] They must be punctilious in executing his plans and enforcing the rules of the school. As soon as Wesley was disappointed in them and could not prevail upon them to carry out his designs, he discharged them at once and sought others.[168] A terse letter to Thomas Welch, who had applied for the position as teacher of English, reveals Wesley's expectations of the masters.

BRISTOL, August 16, 1783.

DEAR THOMAS—You seem to be the man I want. As to salary, you will have thirty pounds a year; board, etc., will be thirty more. But do not come for money. 1. Do not come at all, unless purely to raise a Christian school. 2. Anybody behaving ill I will turn away immediately. 3. I expect you to be in school eight hours a day. 4. In all things I expect you should be circumspect. But you will judge better by considering the printed rules. The sooner you come the better.—I am your affectionate brother, JOHN WESLEY.[169]

The general rules of the house, taken from the *Short Account,* illustrate Wesley's theories of religious education and are the counterpart of his system of training and discipline in

[162] *Ibid.*, VII, 338.
[163] *Journal*, V, 340.
[164] *Ibid.*, V, 340–341.
[165] *Works*, VII, 122, 338.
[166] *Ibid.*, VII, 334, 337–338.
[167] *Ibid.*, 338–339.
[168] *Journal*, III, 530–531.
[169] Quoted in the *History of Kingswood School*, by *Three Old Boys*, 50.

the family. At the thirteenth Methodist Conference, held in 1756, these rules were read and considered one by one and were pronounced "agreeable to Scripture and reason."[170] This verdict was in harmony with Wesley's continuous attitude toward them. The general rules of the house are these:—

First. The children rise at four, winter and summer, and spend the time till five in private; partly in reading, partly in singing, partly in self-examination or meditation (if capable of it), and partly in prayer. They at first use a short form (which is varied continually) and then pray in their own words.

Secondly. At five they all meet together.[171] From six they work till breakfast; for as we have no play days (the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday), so neither do we allow any time for play on any day; he that plays when he is a child will play when he is a man.

On fair days they work according to their strength, in the garden; on rainy days, in the house. Some of them also learn music; and some of the larger will be employed in philosophical experiments; but particular care is taken that they never work alone, but always in the presence of a master.

We have three masters: one for teaching reading, and two for the languages.

Thirdly. The school begins at seven, in which languages are taught till nine; and then writing, &c, till eleven. At eleven the children walk or work. At twelve they dine, and then work or sing till one. They diet nearly thus:

Breakfast.—Milk porridge and water gruel, by turns.
Supper.—Bread and butter or cheese, and milk, by turns.
Dinner.—Sunday.—Cold roast beef.
Monday.—Hashed meat and apple dumplings.
Tuesday.—Boiled mutton.
Wednesday.—Vegetables and dumplings.
Thursday.—Boiled mutton or beef.
Friday.—Vegetables and dumplings. And so in Lent.
Saturday.—Bacon and greens, apple dumplings.

They drink water at meals: nothing between meals. On Friday, if they choose it, they fast till three in the afternoon. Experience shows this is so far from impairing health, that it greatly conduces to it.

[170] *Journal*, IV, 186.

[171] For "public Worship," according to the *Minutes* of the Conference of 1748.—*Publications of the Wesley Historical Society*, No. 1, 55.

Fourthly. From one to four, languages are taught; and then writing &c, till five. At five begins the hour of private prayer; from six they walk or work till supper; a little before seven the public service begins; at eight they go to bed, the youngest first.

Fifthly. They lodge all in one room (now in two), in which a lamp burns all night. Every child lies by himself. A master lies at each end of the room. All their beds have mattresses on them, not feather beds.

Sixthly. On Sunday, at six, they dress and breakfast; at seven, learn hymns or poems; at nine, attend the public service; at twelve, dine and sing; at two, attend the public service; and at four, are privately instructed.[172]

This time-table of the house, in conjunction with the time-table of the school, was drawn up with the sole aim of making the Kingswood boys Christians. If forcing could produce that result, it would succeed. Certainly, there is ample provision in it for public and private worship, for careful oversight, and for the prevention of demoralizing idleness. It shows some slight appreciation of the differences in individual capacity. But there is very little evidence in it that he who drew it up understood child nature. It leans too much toward that extreme severity which Wesley says, in the *Thought on the Manner of Educating Children,* should not be used as the method of instilling religion into children. One would agree with Fitchett that it "was admirably calculated to make them either lunatics or hypocrites."[173]

In the *Plain Account* Wesley quotes several of the rules of this time-table, expands them, and gives fuller reasons for adopting them. He found, he says, after years of experience, that "the reasons of what is peculiar in our method" were plain enough to himself, but they were scarcely known by the rest of mankind. He was therefore led to enlarge somewhat upon them.[174] By studying these reasons in the light of his ideas of education in the family and of his general theological position, it is possible to enter more deeply into the motives that gave rise to the rules.

[172] *Works*, VII, 333–334.

[173] Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, 494. Used by permission of John Murray for Smith, Elden & Co., London.

[174] *Works*, VII, 336.

Several of these rules may be grouped around Wesley's concern for the physical health of folk in general and his desire to keep the boys from softness and effeminacy. The prohibition of feather beds and the enforcement of moderation in eating were calculated to promote health and hardihood. Eating between meals was forbidden "lest they should insensibly contract habits which are neither good for body nor mind."[175] The early hour of rising, Wesley found by years of experience and observation to conduce to good health and to prevent nearly all nervous disorders.[176] So convinced was he of its advantages that in his *Primitive Physick* he advises tender and weakly persons especially to rise at four or five o'clock.[177] The rule regarding walking and work reflects in part his acquaintance with the Moravian Orphanage House in Herrnhut, as these were the only provisions the Moravian authorities there made for recreation.[178] Wesley regarded systematic exercise as indispensable to health, especially in the case of the studious.[179] He considered walking as the best form of it for those able to bear it.[180]

Wesley's enactment forbidding play has provoked widespread criticism. But it is not irrational in the light of his theory of human nature and its remaking. There is no doubt, as Rigg suggests in his *Living Wesley,* that the coarse and lawless play Wesley saw when he was a student at the Charterhouse School had much to do with his restrictions at the Kingswood School.[181] But a deeper reason than this must have motivated him, for he never speaks of that great school except in the fondest terms. On the contrary, he retained for it "a remarkable predilection,"[182] and returned to it again and again to stroll about its walks and to pray, meditate, and write.[183] As a matter of fact, it is unfair to Wesley to single out for criticism his rule against play. It is in keeping with the general tenor of the government of the house, which was dictated by the desire

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[175] *Ibid.*, VII, 340.
[176] *Ibid.*, VII, 339.
[177] Wesley, *Primitive Physick*, 15.
[178] *Journal*, II, 51.
[179] Wesley, *Primitive Physick*, 15–16.
[180] *Ibid.*, 15.
[181] Rigg, *The Living Wesley*, 30.
[182] Moore, *Life of John Wesley*, I, 101.
[183] *Journal*, II, 129 (Diary), 132 (Diary), 137, note 1, editorial; IV, 232.

to eliminate everything that could possibly interfere with the religious development of the boys. His leading view that seriousness, and not levity, is becoming to one who aspires for Christian character and for eternal happiness, and that the training of Christians must be strenuous and not effeminate, led him to denounce many things that would seem otherwise harmless. He might have been opposed to play on the same ground that he opposed frills, fancy dress, and jewelry, because they tend to feed the diseases of human nature. Play might engender pride, self-will, love of the world, and center the eye of the participant upon himself rather than upon God. Such a view harmonizes with the section in the *Instructions for Children* on "How to Regulate Our Joy." His attitude toward "the present stage entertainments" was austere not only because "they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men," but also because they give "a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business."[184] It is not unreasonable to suppose that he was against play at Kingswood for the same reasons.

And, finally, in Wesley's day the physical, moral, and religious values of play had not been discovered. As a matter of fact, play was looked upon as directly hostile to moral and religious development. It was for this reason that Francke, a leading eighteenth-century educator, said, "Play must be forbidden in all its forms," reflecting in this statement the current attitude of many religious leaders. Wesley, at any rate, was obviously in agreement with it. His concluding observation on this point is that since play has no place in the life of adults it can have no rightful place in the life of children. "It is," he says, "a wise German proverb, 'He that plays when he is a boy, will play when he is a man.' If not, why should he learn now what he must unlearn by and by?"[185]

Wesley's desire to remove from the children all opportunities for corrupting each other and for being contaminated by

[184] *Works*, VI, 667.
[185] *Ibid.*, VII, 339.

town influences led him to follow the example of the school at Jena in legislating that the Kingswood boys should never be alone, especially during work and sleep, but always in the sight of a master. As there was no time for play, it was intended that surveillance should be complete. "It is far better to prevent evils than to punish them," is Wesley's terse explanation.[186] This desire also to prevent evil from spreading from one boy to another led him to dismiss summarily any member of the school detected corrupting his companions.[187]

These rules, together with the theories underlying them, remind one forcibly of the Port-Royalist educational practice. Passing reference has already been made to the close resemblance between the two systems. The parallel extends even to many details of management. The Port-Royalists preferred the less thickly settled communities for the location of their schools.[188] They were careful in their selection of masters and pupils.[189] They maintained absolute control of their pupils and close supervision of them.[190] They expurgated their textbooks.[191] And they expelled any boy whose character lacked signs of indwelling grace lest he should corrupt his fellows.[192] All this they did, driven by their theology, in the endeavor to save the souls of their charges. A more fitting summary of Wesley's educational ideal and practice could hardly be suggested than this.

Kingswood School had many periods of spiritual decline, and more often than not disappointed Wesley. And when Christians were not being made there, he felt the school was not answering the purpose of its founding and had better close. At such times he would say, "I will kill or cure: I will have one or the other—a Christian school, or none at all." During the periods when the fires of the revival swept through it he was keenly delighted. But his interest did not wane even when the

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[186] *Works*, VII, 334, 340.
[187] *Journal*, III, 530–531.
[188] Barnard: *The Little Schools of Port-Royal*, 76.
[189] *Ibid.*, 59–60.
[190] *Ibid.*, 72–73.
[191] *Ibid.*, 86–88.
[192] *Ibid.*, 60–61.

spiritual fires burned slowly. His characteristic determination during such periods is revealed in his utterance: "I endeavored once more to bring Kingswood School into order. Surely, the importance of this design is apparent, even from the difficulties that attend it. I have spent more money and time and care on this than almost any design I ever had; and still it exercises all the patience I have. But it is worth all the labor."[193]

[193] *Journal*, IV, 80.

CONCLUSION

JOHN WESLEY maintained a policy of religious education definitely framed and correlated throughout. His theory makes use of nearly every element of his theology and is indissolubly associated with it. If his theological premises are granted, the consequent educational principles appear rational and logical; in any other light many of them are eccentric and may be justly questioned. It is only natural that, with his severe view of human nature and its redemption, he should regard the task of discipline and instruction based upon it with such a serious attitude.

The significance of Wesley as an educator should not be judged, however, so much by the particular details of his pedagogy as by the deep-seated conviction which he held that education itself is the most probable method of bringing religion to children and making them Christian. He championed the central idea of religious education that children are not to be left to grow up in sin, but are, rather, to be carefully disciplined and instructed from their earliest years, and with this in view he harmonized his doctrine of conversion. He furthermore gave a large place to children in the program of the revival and labored to found and conduct schools for them both within and without his societies. He lent his sympathy and gave his active support to the Sunday-school movement founded by Raikes, but for which "it might have been local and transient."

The present age accepts his confidence in education and is witnessing the fulfillment of his prophecy regarding the Sunday-school movement. The Methodist Church, upon whose shoulders fell his mantle more directly, is justified by its historical connection with this movement and by its theological foundations in carrying on the work he began. One cannot but venture the opinion that were Wesley living in the enlightened twentieth century, enlightened both in its theology and in its insight into the meaning of childhood, he would advocate the progressive theories now held by the church which he founded.

APPENDIX

A list showing the topics of the lessons and the sections of Scripture from which Wesley made his selections for the *Lessons for Children.*

1. Of the Creation ..... Gen. 1. 1–8
2. Of the Creation ..... Gen. 1. 9–23
3. Of the Creation ..... Gen. 1. 24–31
4. Of Paradise ..... Gen. 2. 1–25
5. Of the Fall of Man ..... Gen. 3. 1–23
6. Of Cain and Abel ..... Gen. 4. 1–26
7. Of Adam, Enoch, and Noah ..... Gen. 5. 3—6. 22
8. Of the Flood ..... Gen. 7. 11—8. 12
9. Of the End of the Flood ..... Gen. 8. 13—9. 29
10. Of the Tower of Babel and the Birth of Abraham ..... Gen. 11. 1–31
11. Of God's Promise to Abram, and of His Journeys ..... Gen. 12. 1—13. 18
12. Of Abraham's Rescue of Lot, and of Melchisedek ..... Gen. 14. 1–23
13. Of God's Further Promises to Abraham ..... Gen. 15. 1—17. 23
14. Of Abraham's Intercession for Sodom ..... Gen. 18. 1–33
15. Of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah ... Gen. 19. 1–26
16. Of the Birth and Offering of Isaac ..... Gen. 21. 1—22. 18
17. Of the Marriage of Isaac ..... Gen. 24. 1–67
18. Of Abraham's Death; of God's Promises to Isaac; and of the Birth of Esau and Jacob ..... Gen. 25. 7—26. 24
19. Of Jacob's Journey and Vision ..... Gen. 28. 1—29. 13
20. Of Jacob's Marriages; of His Return Home; of His Wrestling with the Angel, and Meeting Esau ..... Gen. 29. 16—33. 18
21. Of Jacob's Children, and Isaac's Death ..... Gen. 35. 23—39. 5
22. Of Joseph's Advancement in Egypt ..... Gen. 41. 1–57
23. Of the Brethren of Joseph Going to Buy Corn in Egypt ..... Gen. 42. 1–38
24. Of Benjamin's Going into Egypt ..... Gen. 43. 2–33
25. Of Joseph's Making Himself Known to His Brethren ..... Gen. 45. 1–28
26. Of Jacob's Going into Egypt ..... Gen. 46. 1—47. 31
27. Of Jacob's Blessing His Children, and of His Death ..... Gen. 48. 1—49. 33
28. Of the Burial of Jacob, and the Death of Joseph. Gen. 50. 1–26
29. Of the Birth of Moses ..... Exod. 1. 6—2. 21
30. Of God's Appearing Unto Moses, and Sending Him to Israel ..... Exod. 3. 1–20

31. Of God's Sending Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. Exod. 4. 10—5. 23
32. Of the Rod Turned Into a Serpent, and the Water Into Blood..... Exod. 7. 7–23
33. Of the Plague of Frogs, of Lice, and of Flies.... Exod. 8. 5–32
34. Of the Murrain, the Boils, the Hail, the Locusts, and the Darkness..... Exod. 9. 1–10. 23
35. Of the Passover, and the Death of the First-born..... Exod. 12. 1–41
36. Of the Journey of the Israelites, and the Destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea... Exod. 13. 17—14. 30
37. Of the Quails, the Manna, and Amalek..... Exod. 15. 22—17. 13
38. Of the Giving of the Law at Mount Sinai..... Exod. 19. 1–25
39. The Ten Commandments..... Exod. 20. 1–20
40. Various Precepts..... Exod. 20. 21—31. 18.
41. Of the Golden Calf..... Exod. 32. 1–35
42. Of Moses Talking With God..... Exod. 33. 7—34. 34
43. A Blessing and a Curse..... Lev. 26. 3–44
44. Of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram..... Num. 16. 1–35
45. Of Balak and Balaam..... Num. 22. 1–35
46. Balaam's Prophecies..... Num. 23. 3—24. 17
47. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 1. 1—4. 40
48. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 6. 4—7. 15
49. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 8. 1–20
50. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 9. 4—10. 22
51. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 11. 1—29. 29
52. An Exhortation to Obedience..... Deut. 30. 1—31. 6
53. The Song of Moses..... Deut. 32. 1–43
54. The Last Words and Death of Moses..... Deut. 33. 1—34. 12
55. The Israelites Pass Over Jordan..... Josh. 1. 1—3. 17
56. The Taking of Jericho..... Josh. 5. 1—6. 27
57. The Sun and Moon Stand Still..... Josh. 10. 1–40
58. Of Caleb, and of the Two Tribes and a Half... Josh. 14. 6—22. 6
59. Joshua's Exhortation Before His Death..... Josh. 23. 1—24. 31
60. Of Gideon..... Judg. 6. 1–35
61. The Overthrow of the Midianites..... Judg. 6. 36—8. 32
62. Of Jephthah..... Judg. 10. 6—11. 39
63. Of Samson's Birth and Marriage..... Judg. 13. 1—14. 20
64. Of Samson's Valor and Death..... Judg. 15. 1—16. 31
65. Of the Birth and Childhood of Samuel..... 1 Sam. 1. 1—2. 26
66. God Reveals Himself to Samuel. The Ark Taken by the Philistines..... 1 Sam. 3. 1—4. 18
67. The Ark Restored. Samuel Judges Israel..... 1 Sam. 5. 1—7. 17
68. Saul Made King, Delivers Israel..... 1 Sam. 8. 1—11. 15
69. The Overthrow of the Philistines..... 1 Sam. 13. 3—14. 23
70. The Destruction of the Amalekites..... 1 Sam. 15. 1–33
71. Of David and Goliath..... 1 Sam. 17. 1–52
72. Saul Seeks to Kill David..... 1 Sam. 18. 1—19. 24
73. David's Escape from Saul..... 1 Sam. 22. 1—23. 29

74. David, by Sparing Saul, Sheweth His Innocency ..... 1 Sam. 24. 1—25. 1
75. David Spareth Saul Again ..... 1 Sam. 26. 1–25
76. Of the Witch of Endor ..... 1 Sam. 27. 3—28. 25
77. The Death of Saul. David's Lamentation ..... 1 Sam. 31. 1—2 Sam. 1. 27
78. David Is Made King Over Judah and Israel ..... 2 Sam. 2. 1—6. 23
79. Of Bathsheba. David Reproved by Nathan ..... 2 Sam. 11. 1—12. 24
80. Of Amnon and Absalom ..... 2 Sam. 13. 1—15. 6
81. Absalom's Rebellion ..... 2 Sam. 15. 7—16. 12
82. The End of Absalom's Rebellion ..... 2 Sam. 16. 15—18. 17
83. David's Restoration. He Numbers the People. 2 Sam. 19. 1—24. 25
84. Of Solomon's Wisdom ..... 1 Kings 2. 1—6. 38
85. Of the Dedication of the Temple, and of the Queen of Sheba ..... 1 Kings 8. 1—11. 43
86. Of Rehoboam and Jeroboam ..... 1 Kings 12. 1—14. 30
87. Elijah Fed by the Ravens ..... 1 Kings 17. 1–24
88. Of Elijah and the Prophets of Baal ..... 1 Kings 18. 1–46
89. Elijah Flees from Jezebel ..... 1 Kings 19. 1–21
90. The Syrians Overthrown ..... 1 Kings 20. 1–34
91. Of Naboth and the Jezreelite ..... 1 Kings 21. 1–29
92. The Death of Ahab ..... 1 Kings 22. 1–38
93. Elijah Taken Up to Heaven ..... 2 Kings 2. 1–22
94. Of the Widow's Oil, and the Shunammite ..... 2 Kings 4. 1–37
95. The Cure of Naaman ..... 2 Kings 5. 1–27
96. Of Elisha and the Syrians ..... 2 Kings 6. 1—7. 17
97. Jehu Made King. The Death of Jezebel ..... 2 Kings 9. 1–37
98. Jehu Destroys Ahab's House, and the Worshipers of Baal ..... 2 Kings 10. 1–31
99. Israel Carried Into Captivity ..... 2 Kings 17. 3–41
100. Of Hezekiah and Sennacherib ..... 2 Kings 18. 3—19. 37
101. Of Josiah ..... 2 Kings 22. 1–27
2 Chron. 35. 20–24
102. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Kings 24. 1–21
103. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 1 Chron. 12. 16—29. 19
104. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Chron. 10. 5—16. 14
105. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Chron. 19. 1—20. 37
106. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Chron. 24. 1—25. 27
107. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Chron. 26. 1—28. 27
108. Jerusalem Destroyed ..... 2 Chron. 29. 1—33. 20
109. Of the Rebuilding of the Temple ..... Ezra 1. 1—3. 13
110. The Building Hindered, and Begun Again ..... Ezra 4. 1—6. 22
111. Ezra Goes to Jerusalem, and Mourns and Prays for the People ..... Ezra 7. 1—10. 12
112. The Wall of Jerusalem Rebuilt ..... Neh. 1. 1—6. 15
113. The Solemn Fast, Repentance, and Confession of the People ..... Neh. 8. 1—10. 29
114. Esther Made Queen ..... Esth. 1. 1—2. 23
115. Of Hamon and Mordecai ..... Esth. 3. 1—5. 14

116. Hamon Destroyed, and the Jews Preserved.... Esth. 7. 1—10. 3
117. The Prosperity and Afflictions of Job..... Job 1. 1—2. 13
118. The First Speech of Job, and the Answer of Eliphaz..... Job 3. 1—4. 26
119. The Second Speech of Job, and the Answer of Bildad..... Job 6. 1—8. 20
120. The Third Speech of Job, and the Answer of Zophar..... Job 9. 1—11. 20
121. The Fourth Speech of Job, and the Answer of Eliphaz..... Job 12. 1—15. 34
122. The Fifth Speech of Job, and the Answer of Bildad..... Job 16. 1—18. 21
123. The Sixth Speech of Job, and the Answer of Zophar..... Job 19. 1—20. 29
124. The Seventh Speech of Job, and the Answer of Eliphaz..... Job 21. 1—22. 29
125. Job's Eighth Speech, Bildad's Answer, and Job's Reply..... Job 24. 1—27. 23
126. Job Shews the Price of Wisdom, and Protests His Integrity..... Job 28. 1—30. 31
127. Job Professes His Integrity in Several Duties.. Job 31. 1-40
128. Elihu Reproveth Job and His Friends..... Job 32. 5—33. 33
129. Elihu Reproveth Job..... Job 34. 1—35. 16
130. Elihu Justifieth God..... Job 36. 2—37. 24
131. God Answereth Job..... Job 38. 1—40. 5
132. God Answereth and Blesseth Job..... Job 40. 6—42. 17
*133. ..... Psa. 1. 1—8. 9
134. ..... Psa. 9. 1—16. 1
135. ..... Psa. 17. 1—19. 14
136. ..... Psa. 20. 1—25. 22
137. ..... Psa. 27. 1—31. 24
138. ..... Psa. 33. 2—34. 22
139. ..... Psa. 35. 1—38. 22
140. ..... Psa. 39. 1—42. 11
141. ..... Psa. 43. 1—49. 20
142. ..... Psa. 50. 1—57. 11
143. ..... Psa. 59. 1—65. 12
144. ..... Psa. 66. 1—68. 35
145. ..... Psa. 69. 1—73. 28
146. ..... Psa. 74. 1—84. 12
147. ..... Psa. 85. 1—89. 52
148. A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God..... Psa. 90. 1—92. 15
149. ..... Psa. 93. 1—97. 12
150. ..... Psa. 98. 1—103. 22
151. ..... Psa. 104. 1-35
152. ..... Psa. 107. 1—112. 9

* Of the remaining lessons, only lesson 148 has a topic assigned.

153. Psa. 113. 1—118. 29
154. Psa. 119. 1–96
155. Psa. 119. 97–176
156. Psa. 120. 2—141. 5
157. Psa. 139. 1—144. 15
158. Psa. 145. 1—150. 6
159. Prov. 1. 1—4. 27
160. Prov. 5. 3—9. 12
161. Prov. 10. 1—13. 24
162. Prov. 14. 6—19. 29
163. Prov. 20. 1—23. 32
164. Prov. 24. 10—26. 28
165. Prov. 27. 1—31. 30
166. Eccles. 1. 1—3. 14
167. Eccles. 4. 1—7. 29
168. Eccles. 8. 8—12. 14
169. Isa. 1. 2—12. 6
170. Isa. 14. 3—32. 17
171. Isa. 35. 1—40. 22
172. Isa. 40. 25—44. 28
173. Isa. 45. 1—49. 26
174. Isa. 50. 2—53. 13
175. Isa. 54. 7—59. 19
176. Isa. 60. 1—63. 16
177. Isa. 64. 1—66. 2
178. Jer. 1. 4—9. 24
179. Jer. 10. 6—29. 14
180. Jer. 31. 1—33. 9
181. Ezek. 3. 16—18. 23
182. Ezek. 18. 24—33. 32
183. Dan. 1. 1—2. 48
184. Dan. 3. 1–29
185. Dan. 4. 1–37
186. Dan. 6. 1–27
187. Wisd. of Sol. 1. 1—2. 24
188. Wisd. of Sol. 3. 1—5. 23
189. Wisd. of Sol. 6. 6—7. 16
190. Wisd. of Sol. 7. 22—9. 17
191. Wisd. of Sol. 11. 20—19. 22
192. Ecclesiasticus 1. 1—4. 18
193. Ecclesiasticus 4. 20—9. 15
194. Ecclesiasticus 10. 7—16. 28
195. Ecclesiasticus 17. 1—22. 22
196. Ecclesiasticus 23. 1—29. 17
197. Ecclesiasticus 31. 5—35. 19
198. Ecclesiasticus 36. 1—41. 10
199. Ecclesiasticus 42. 1—50. 23
200. Ecclesiasticus 51. 1–30

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